GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINING CONTENT OF TEACHER SUPPORT TEAMS

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare hereby the content of this study project to be my own original work and that it has never before been partially, or as a whole, used by me for completing a degree at any other university.

SUMMARY

Teacher support teams were established in South Africa as part of the strategy for handling the changing educational environment. These teams, without proper skills training, were established in various parts of South Africa.

In the early phases of the research process, the need for the training of these newly established teams arose. Team members needed skills to execute the tasks expected of a *Teacher Support Team* effectively. There was no guide of which skills were in the greatest need of training, nor any guidelines concerning the most effective methods of training. The purpose of the present research is thus to compile a set of guidelines for the content of a skills training manual. A small section will be devoted to preferred methods of training.

It must be emphasized that this research only provides guidelines for the compilation of such a training manual. The emphasis on guidelines is the result of different school, social and physical contexts, which influenced the needs of the *Teacher Support Teams.* As each team's needs concerning training content and method will differ according to their circumstances, so will their training manual. It is therefore not feasible to compile a set, skills training manual to suit everyone. Broad guidelines will thus be given in order for each team to compile their own training manual to suit their own training needs. The co-ordinator of the newly established *Teacher Support Team* may facilitate the compilation of such a training manual.

A list of possible skills to increase the effectivity of the team was compiled from the available literature study. A detailed discussion of the respective skills has been done in the literature study. This discussion may be used for the compilation of action steps in the training of the skills.

From the literature, a short discussion of the most effective training methods has also been done. Training methods, not the content of the skills to be trained, is the focus of this study. This is the reason for the very simplistic discussion of training methods.

The research group consists of six different groups of *Teacher Support Teams.* The first group, a large group of 50 schools, did not react positively to the questionnaires sent to them. The second group consisted of spontaneously formed *Support Teams* while the third, fourth, and fifth groups were *Teacher Support Teams*, which were facilitated by a co-ordinator. The sixth group was a school management team of supportive nature.

Skills in need of training and preferred training methods formed the focus of this current study. A list of needs to be trained was compared to the list of needs derived from the literature study. The skills which overlapped in the literature study and the research process, were indicated in the discussion of results. Most of the skills found in the literature study were also present in the needs analysis of the research group.

Data from the literature study and from four of the five groups, which responded in the data collection process, preferred practical training methods to theoretical methods. In the empirical study the different groups forming the research group also preferred small group training to mass training. Training and implementation of *Teacher Support Teams* should be done on a personalized and individualized base, as the context and needs of each school or community differ.

In conclusion it should be again stressed that this study only provides broad guidelines for the compilation of a training manual. This is not a training manual to be used without any adaptations. It only provides the rational of skills to be trained and some ideas on the possible skills to be trained, the content of this training and preferred training methods.

OPSOMMING

Onderwyser Ondersteunings Spanne is in Suid Afrika bekendgestel as deel van 'n strategie om die veranderende onderwys siseem te hanteer. Hierdie spanne is in verskeie dele van Suid Afrika geïmplimenteer, sonder enige vaardigheidsopleiding.

'n Behoefte aan die opleiding van hierdie spanne het reeds vroeg in die navorsingsproses geblyk. Spanlede het vaardighede benodig om hul taak effektief te verrig. Daar is geen riglyne oor watter vaardighede benodig word, die inhoud daarvan en die wyse waarvolgens opleiding moet geskied, beskikbaar nie. Die doel van die huidige navorsing is dus die samestelling van 'n stel riglyne vir die inhoud van 'n vaardighede opleidings handleiding. Daar sal ook 'n klein gedeelte afgestaan word aan metodes van opleiding.

Dit moet beklemtoon word dat hierdie navorsing slegs riglyne verskaf vir die samestelling van 'n opleidingshandleiding. Die klem op slegs riglyne is die gevolg van die invloed wat verskillende kontekste en sosiale- en fisiese omgewings op die aard en behoeftes van die *Onderwyser Ondersteunings Span* het. Elke span se verskillende opleidings behoeftes lei tot 'n verskil in hul opleidings handleiding. Dit is daarom nie aangewese om 'n vaste handleiding vir almal se gebruik saam te stel nie. Breë riglyne word dus daar gestel sodat elke *Onderwyser Ondersteunings Span* sy eie handleiding kan saamstel. Die saamstelling van so 'n handleiding kan deur die koördineerder van die span gefasiliteer word.

'n Lys van moontlike vaardighede om in 'n handleiding te vervat, is saamgestel uit die literatuur. Elke vaardigheid is in detail bespreek. Hierdie besprekings kan gebruik word in die samestelling van aksiestappe in vaardigheids opleiding.

Uit die literatuur is a kort bespreking van die mees gevraagde opleidingsmetodes ook saamgestel. Opleidings metodes is egter nie die fokus van hierdie studie nie. Dit is die rede vir die baie simplistiese bespreking van opleidingsmetodes.

Die navorsingsgroep bestaan uit ses verskillende groepe *Onderwyser Ondersteunings Spanne.* Die eerste groep het bestaan uit 50 skole wat nie positief op die vraelyste gereageer het nie. Die tweede groep is spontaan gevormde *Ondersteunings Spanne.* Die derde, vierde, en vyfde groepe is *Onderwyser Ondersteunings Spanne* wat deur 'n fasiliteerder gekoördineer word. Die sesde groep is 'n skool bestuurspan met 'n ondersteunende karakter.

Die noodsaak van vaardigheidsopleiding en die vaardighede wat opgelei moet word is die fokus van die huidige studie. 'n Lys van behoeftes vir opleiding is vergelyk met behoeftes uit die literatuur studie. Die vaardighede wat tussen die literatuurstudie en die navorsingsproses oorvleuel, is aangedui in die uiteensetting van die bevindinge. Die meeste van die vaardighede uit die literatuurstudie oorvleuel met dié uit empiriese navorsing.

Inligting uit die literatuurstudie en die navorsingsproses het gewys op die voorkeur van praktiese opleidingsmetodes bo teoretiese opleiding. Die navorsingsproses het ook 'n voorkeur vir kleingroep opleiding bo massa opleiding aangedui. Opleiding en implementering van *Onderwyser Ondersteunings Spanne* moet op 'n persoonlike en geïndividualiseerde basis geskied aangesien skole en sosiale kontekste verskil.

Ter afsluiting moet dit weer eens beklemtoon word dat hierdie slegs breë riglyne is vir die samestelling van 'n opleidingshandleiding. Hierdie is dus nie per sy 'n opleidingshandleiding wat sonder enige aanpassings gebruik kan word nie. Dit verskaf slegs die rasionaal van vaardighede wat opgelei moet word. Dit verskaf ook idees aangaande die vaardighede wat opgelei moet word, die inhoud van hierdie opleiding en die gewildste opleidingsmetodes.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The need for additional intervention strategies in the rapidly changing South African education system should be addressed as quickly as possible. There has been a dramatic paradigm shift in education in South Africa. This is reflected in the shift from content-based education towards outcomes based education:

> *Observation and experience indicate that education systems affect life chances of citizens and profoundly affect access to their opportunities in society. South Africa is in a transition, characterized by transformation in every sphere of life, including the sphere of education and training. Embraced in this transformation is the significant paradigm shift in the way people think about learning and the way it is organized in education and training"* (Carl, 1997: 6).

Educators (teachers) are now confronted with a whole new way of thinking about learning and teaching. This also means a change in conduct. The system is changing and teachers have to adapt to this new system:

> *...the system must change to accommodate all learners, as the constitution guarantees equal educational rights for all learners. Education for all does not have to imply a lowering of standards, on the contrary, it is about good and effective teaching. A good teacher knows and understands the diversities and the needs of his/her learners and*

> *adapts his/her instruction and classroom management accordingly* (Campher, 1997: 23).

This means that we have teachers who were trained and who managed a content-based education system. Those teachers now have to change their way of thinking as well as their instruction methods to suit the new outcomes based system. ThereforE they need support systems to help them cope with the demands of such a new education system. According to Leinwand (1992: 467) teachers who are asked to implement a new system, need both moral and tangible support.

The implementation of a new system, such as the outcomes based system and inclusive education, also means a process of change in attitudes of the whole nation. The unknown and uncertainty usually cause fear in people. According to Leinwand (1992: 467) making change is scary. Teachers are confronted with an unknown, new system of schooling and are not prepared for it. They must deal with difficulties experienced in the implementation of any new system. If this is taken into consideration, it is understandable that teachers' attitudes will become more negative. These attitudes are reflected in the following quotation from a local newspaper:

> *In this case the debate is about education,...the disastrous efforts to introduce outcomes based education (OBE), a faddish, experimental, expensive, complex, controversial and dangerous method which has been tried and, mainly, abandoned in several advanced countries. ... Parental experiences of OBE around the world reveal some real horror stories. ...Another threat of OBE is its insidious attempt to influence the attitudes of children. ... Why do we need to drag some weird scheme out of some quasi-intellectual cesspool? A report in last week's Sunday Times carried the headline 'Curriculum 2005 fails Grade 1'. We may rest assured that OBE will fail all the other grades as well, as it has done elsewhere (Mulholland, Sunday Times, 1998: 14).*

support is crucial for people who are trying to bring change about (Leinwand, 1992: 467). Teachers need support in dealing with this new system, their own and the nation's negative attitudes and implementation at grass roots level. The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* has been proven over the world to provide excellent support to teachers with the many difficulties experienced in the school system (Blau & Scott, 1994: 135; Johnson & Brooker, 1993: 283, 291; Reiman, Bostick, Lassiter & Cooper, 1995: 105-117; Rich, 1983: 766-769; Kovaleski, Tucker & Stevens, 1996: 44-47; Internet article, 1991: 1,2; Internet article, 1997: 1).

According to Blau and Scott in Henkin and Wanat (1994: 135), teams in schools may be an effective vehicle for assisting teachers with change. The following are only a few examples of different kinds of support teams, assisting teachers in coping with a variety of difficulties.

- **School Support Centres** in Queensland are part of the restructuring of the school system there. They play an important role in supporting teachers to cope with the restructuring process (Johnson & Brooker, 1993: 283, 291).

- **The counsellor- and teacher-led support groups for beginning teachers**, of Reiman, Bostick, Lassiter and Cooper (1995: 105-117). Formal new teacher induction programmes aim to improve learning and teaching for students, to help novice teachers, to revitalize experienced mentors in their roles and to increase efficiency. With these aims in mind mentor counsellor – mentor teacher support groups for novice teachers were implemented.

- **Teacher-initiated support groups** studied by Rich (1983: 766-769). The aim of these groups are to prevent stagnation of teachers because of isolation. The teams recognize teachers as being an incredible source of knowledge (Rich, 1983: 766).

- **Support teams in New Zealand schools** were strategically implemented in 1987, for the mainstreaming policy. This model combines the roles of the method and resource teacher, consulting teacher, and teacher assistance teams.

- **The instructional support teams in Pennsylvania.** These teams aim to function as intervention groups to link school resources to improve the abillity of the school to support learners with special educational needs (Kovaleski, Tucker & Stevens, 1996: 44-47).

- **School-based Teams** used by School District No. 34, Abbortsford. The roles of this team include: school progress of students, identification of students' needs and that of the school, coordination of referals for additional testing of students, placement of students with special needs in support programs, and coordination of integration of students with special needs into mainstream classrooms (School-based Teams, 1999).

- **SBIT, School Based Intervention Team model** of the Syracuse City School District's Special Education Task Force and the Board of Education. This model is based on a team consultation model, which addresses academic and behavioural difficulties of students (SBIT: A Brief Description, 1999).

The need for a support system like these teams is apparent in South Africa (Campher, 1997: 3-4). According to the present study, the core *Teacher Support Team (TST)* should be trained in the essential skills to support their peers. Trained support team members will prevent themselves and other staff members from being unsure about their support system.

The question we should now ask ourselves is whether we know which skills are needed and which methods to use in effective training programmes.

1.2 VALUE AND ACTUALITY

1.2.1 Introduction

In New Zealand the Department of Education proposed *Support Teams* within schools as a strategy to handle mainstreaming. This *Support Team* combines elements of the Method and Resource Teacher, Consulting Teacher and Teacher Assistance Team models. In New Zealand Education the classroom is seen as the best place of learning for all students and the regular class teacher as the most appropriate instructor. Throughout the process of teacher support through *Support Teams*, the classroom teacher remains responsible for the direct teaching and control of the pupils in the class. The *Support Team* only provides collaborative assistance in needs assessment, programme development, implementation and evaluation (Moore, Gynn & Gold, 1993: 194). As mainstreaming is also part of the South African situation the same strategy may be useful here.

The *Instructional Support Team* approach of Kovaleski, Tucker and Stevens (1996, 44-47) is based *on the premise that many teachers need help in meeting students' increasingly complex academic, behavioural, social, and emotional needs.*

1.2.2 The purpose of Teacher Support Teams

The purpose of Support Teams in New Zealand is to assist and support the regular class teacher in providing mainstreamed assistance for children who need altered classroom conduct to fulfil in their academic and behavioural needs (Moore *et al.*, 1993: 194).
In South Africa mainstreaming is part of the shift towards outcomes based education. At present South African teachers also have to assist children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. *Support Teams* will thus have mainly the same

purpose in South Africa: the purpose being support and assistance to the classroom teacher.

Pennsylvania makes use of the *Instructional Support Team* programme. It is designed to assure that regular classroom education is used for all, to provide peer support and problem solving assistance for teachers, and assist teachers with students with special educational needs in their classrooms (Kovaleski *et al.,* 1996: 44).

Apart from the already mentioned collaborative assistance in needs assessment, programme development, implementation and evaluation, the *Support Team* also provides in: identifying teacher and student needs within the school and coordinates the delivery of services to meet these needs. The *Support Team* also serves as a forum for within-school problem-solving and as a vehicle for collaborative effort between parents, itinerant professionals and the school (Kovaleski *et al.,* 1996: 44). Especially in the case of novice teachers Veenman (in Thies-Sprinthall and Gerler, 1990: 19) stated that solutions to novices' problems include both pedagogical assistance and psychological support. In the South African situation, with the change in curriculum and thus extra psychological demands, teachers surely need both pedagogical and psychological support. In the new system in South Africa, all teachers are novices, therefore the findings of Thies-Sprinthall *et al.* (1992: 19-22) are applicable in this situation.

Furth and Vygotsky (in Thies-Sprinthall *et al.*, 1990: 19) pointed out that cognition and affect interact. A supportive atmosphere is necessary for complex thought and action. Complex actions and thought processes are definitely present in the current South African educational situation as major change took place over a short period of time. *Education in South Africa is in the process of massive transformation,* ... (Campher, 1998: 3) A supportive atmosphere is thus necessary in the South African education. The following quote support the plea for *Support Groups* as a means of solving teachers' problems:

> *She demonstrated the positive effects of support groups for student teachers that are led by professionals with the counseling and group facilitation skills necessary for alleviating teacher stress and for providing the challenge required to foster professional growth* (Fuller, in Thies-Sprinthall *et. al.,* 1990: 19).

Counsellor-led *Support Groups* promote growth in the way teachers think about themselves and their teaching (Thies-Sprinthall *et al.*, 1990: 19). Rich (1983: 766) noted that teachers are often alone in a non-supportive environment. It is then often easier to do things in the old way. To combat this tendency, professional development strategies like *Teacher Support Teams* are developing. This also support Thies-Sprinthall et al. on *support groups changing the way teachers think (*Thies-Sprinthall *et al.*, 1990: 19).

The value of *Support Teams* can also be seen in the research of Kovaleski *et. al.* (1996: 44-47) in Pennsylvania schools on *Instructional Support Teams. The Instructional Support Team serves as a bridge between special and regular education programmes (*Kovaleski *et al.,* 1996: 44). Their project data from schools implementing these teams indicated a 76 percent reduction in grade retentions.

Moore *et al.* (1993: 195) noted six distinguishing characteristics of the *Teacher Support Model:*

- it has a team approach to meeting teacher and student needs within the school;
- intervention is done in the regular classroom and is not a withdrawal/remedial process;
- the support teacher assists the classroom teacher in a consultative way;
- intervention is a collaborative process of assessment, problem analysis, planning, implementation and systematic evaluation;
- parents are involved as fully as they wish;
- the team focuses on teacher empowerment.

In this research the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is presented as one very useful way for teachers to form a supporting network and to enhance optimal learning. Camphor (1998) already provided teachers with an establishment plan for *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)*. Although Campher (1998: 35) mentions training as a major factor in team effectiveness, no guidelines for training have been set in her manual for the establishment of a *Teacher Support Team (TST).* In the present research the focus is on the issue of training of *Teacher Support Team (TST)* members in skills necessary for an effective support team.

1.2.3 The importance of training

In the research of Moore et al. (1993: 193-202) the importance of training is one of the major points of discussion. They found *correlational evidence of the importance of on-going training and professional support for Support Teachers* (Moore *et al.,* 1993: 201). In their research personnel selected for the *Support Teacher* role were mostly qualified and experienced in special education. However, few were experienced in the collegial supportive role. This meant the need for additional training.

In the current study schools where *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* were established without the proper training of team members and a back-up service, failed to reply to questionnaires concerning *Teacher Support Teams (TST's).* Queries to some of these schools showed that the establishment of the *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* had been unsuccessful there thus the following research problem.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.3.1 Problem

After the establishment of a *Teacher Support Team (TST),* teachers of the core team are usually not properly equipped to function within a team like this.

1.3.2 Sub-statements of the research problem

1.3.2.1 Teachers need to learn certain basic skills for the optimal functioning of the *Teacher Support Team (TST).*

1.3.2.2 There are no or few guidelines for the training of *Teacher Support Team (TST)* members.

1.3.2.3 There is a need for guidelines for such a training programme.

1.4 GOAL

The provision of a set of guidelines for the training content of skills needed by members of the *Teacher Support Team (TST).*

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1 Literature study

The literature study focuses specifically on training of *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)*. A detailed study will be done on the specific skills which, in literature, are needed by *Teacher Support Team (TST)* members to ensure the proper functioning of the team. Some attention will also be given to training methods.

1.5.2 Type of research

This research is explanatory as well as problem solving by nature. The focus will thus not be on quantitative data, which focuses on numbers, but on qualitative data, which is in the form of words.

1.5.2.1 A qualitative study

This is a qualitative study, which can be defined in the words of Miles and Huberman (1984: 15):

> *...a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts.*
>
> and
>
> *...it goes beyond how much there is of something to tell us about its essential qualities* (Miles & Huberman, 1984: 215).

This research does not mainly use experimental designs and measurement issues. Qualitative methods are used to describe an array of interpretative techniques that attempt to describe and clarify the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena: skills to be trained. It is by design rather open-ended and interpretative. The researcher's interpretation and description are the significant

data collection acts in a study like this. Thus the data of a qualitative study, such as the present one, may be described as:

- having a subjective meaning;
- being rarely quantifiable and
- being difficult to use in making quantitative comparisons.

Qualitative research is more concerned with the meaning of what is observed. Qualitative methodology, used in this study, uses the experience and intuition of the researcher to describe the processes and structures being studied (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 78).

Van Maanen (in Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 79) suggests the following number of characteristics associated with qualitative research. This is important for the nature of the present study.

- Qualitative research begins with close-up, first-hand inspection (analytical induction).
- The researcher desires to witness first-hand what is being studied (proximity).
- The topics of research are usually ordinary, normal behaviour (ordinary behaviour).
- The research seeks descriptions for what is occurring (descriptive emphasis).
- Qualitative research is geared toward the explanation of similarity and coherence (shrinking variance).
- A major objective of qualitative research like the present one is to enlighten the consumer without confusing him or her. It should thus be coherent and logically persuasive (enlighten the consumer).

1.5.2.2 Educational research

This research is educational by nature. De Wet *et al.* (1989: 10) describe educational research as presenting the following four(4) characteristics:

- it studies the education of the child;
- it includes the maturation of the child as a whole: at home, in school, church and community;
- it is research which adds any knowledge to the phenomenon of education;
- it wishes to organize, register, comprehend, explain and construct our knowledge in education into theories.

As the present research contains the above characteristics it is educational by nature.

1.5.2.3 Descriptive research

It will describe certain skills to be mastered by teachers who form part of a *Teacher Support Team (TST),* ãs well as guidelines and principles for the training of these teams.

De Wet et al. (1998: 12) describe *descriptive research* as research which collects information about an existing situation. It is a recording of existing circumstances through questionnaires, interviews and evaluation instruments.

In the present study existing needs of support teachers are being described and with the use of the latter certain guidelines will be set.

1.5.3 The empirical study

1.5.3.1 Research group

The research group is divided into six subgroups.

(a) Group 1

50 schools in the Western Cape area.

(b) Group 2

Spontaneously formed *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)*.

(c) Group 3

Teacher Support Teams (TST's) established by a coordinator in the Worcester area.

(d) Group 4

Teacher Support Teams (TST's) established by a coordinator in the Southern Cape area.

(e) Group 5

A *Teacher Support Team (TST)* established by a coordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia.

(f) Group 6

A school management team of supportive nature.

1.5.3.2 Research instruments

(a) Questionnaires

Open-ended questions combined with some multiple choice questions.

(b) Focus interviews

Telephonic and / or personal discussions to verify the findings in the questionnaires.

(c) Telephonic interviews

Open, informal discussions, some direction given by the researcher concerning skills and the type of training preferred.

(d) Informal observation

Observations of the dynamics of *TST's,* including the process of establishing the team, skills needed by members and method of training.

1.5.3.3 Research procedure

As a result of the research of Campher (1997) a manual for the establishment of *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* was published in 1998. Another outcome of the Campher (1997) research is the establishment of *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* in schools, mainly across the Western Cape. With the establishment of these teams the need for training of team members arose. In order to provide proper guidelines for training, data was collected for a situation analysis and needs assessment by means of:

questionnaires to Western Cape schools with newly established *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* (group 1);

questionnaires combined with focus interviews to spontaneously formed *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* (group 2);

questionnaires and telephonic interviews to collect data from the coordinators of Worcester and the Southern Cape areas (groups 3 and 4);

telephonic interviews with the coordinator from Oranjemund, Namibia (group 5);

questionnaires to and focus interviews with the school management team of supportive nature (group 6).

Throughout the research process, informal observations were made in order to draw conclusions which will be stated in Chapters 3 and 4 of this research.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF RELATED CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Teacher

The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is school-based (Daniels *et al.*, 1993: 170). This implies that teachers in this respect are teachers at schools where children are taught. The teachers who make use of the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* are mainly classroom teachers.

> *Through self-supportive networks teachers can gain greater understanding of classroom problems and increase their competence in dealing with them* (Daniels *et al.,* 1993: 169).

The members of the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* are any professionals in the school (or outside when expert help from outside the school is necessary) (Idol, in Hosen & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6240).

1.6.2 Support

The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is mainly a problem solving team where the classroom teacher gets assisted in a consultative way. Intervention through this team is a collaborative process of assessment, problem analysis, planning, implementation and systemic evaluation (Moore *et al.*, 1993: 195). Thus support means a group of colleagues who are available to assist the classroom teacher with problems which may be difficult to solve alone. The group, together with the teacher who needs help, will intervene through collaborative problem solving and planning. As the current research is focussed on the school as a system, the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* will also provide support with difficulties concerning the system as a whole. Thus support in this case means a problem solving and planning process through collaboration and consultation.

1.6.3 Team

> *Teaming arrangements refer to various configurations of groups of educators engaged in group decision-making* (Idol, in Hosen & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6240).

According to Idol (in Hosen & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6240) professional collaboration forms the underlying base for the various team arrangements, which exist in education. Collaborative consultation forms the base for team arrangements. This is a problem-solving process among the professionals on the team. It is *an interactive process which enables people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems* (Idol, in Hosen & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6242).

In conclusion, teams must be distinguished from ordinary groups. According to Hart (1992: 2-2) a team is a complex entity, not simply a group of people. An effective team deals with leadership, communication, organizational structure, work procedures and interpersonal relationships.

> *A team is a highly developed group which has learned how to work together to achieve its goals... Team members explore possible methods to work together, try out those methods, then revise and refine them* (Hart, 1992: 2-2).

1.6.4 Teacher Support Team

This is a special team arrangement in education to provide support to teachers within a specific school. Campher (1997: 86) described the concept of the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* as follows:

- it is school based;
- support is given in an indirect way;
- consultation and collaboration are highlighted processes in the team;
- specialists can participate on invitation if needed.

The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* may thus be described as a combination of two team arrangements of Idol (in Hosen & Postlethwate, 1994: 6240) namely, *Teacher Assistance Teams* and *School-based Resource Teams*. The first is a problem-solving team consisting of classroom teachers who serve as advisors or facilitators to other teachers. The second team arrangement is a team formed to solve a particular school-related problem. Any professional in the school, or outside, if needed can be part of the team.

The latter team differs from the *Teacher Support Team* in that the *School-based Resource Team* only forms when there is a specific problem which need attendance. The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is a permanent arrangement. It may be used when needed by any teacher in the school, for any kind of problem: professional, educational or personal.

The *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is not the same as mainstream curriculum, year and management teams. Bradley and Roaf (1995: 96) stressed the importance of co-ordination and team building. By this they meant co-ordination between the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* and other teams as well as between the other teams existing in the school. *Co-ordination between them* (other teams) *for successful SEN work is most effectively achieved by a team located outside of them, independent yet familiar with all of them* (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96).

The administrative and management teams of a particular school have to work closely with the *Teacher Support Team (TST)*, because positive action requires change, risk taking and the ability to reprioritize resources so that gaps in provision may be identified and filled (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96).

TST's take as their focus the teacher and not the child... therefore the educational service to learners is indirect (Daniels, Norwich & Anghileri, 1993: 169). Daniels *et al.* (1993: 169) maintained the following about *Teacher Support Teams (TST's):*

- they offer a forum for collective analysis of teaching problems;
- it is an example of school-based development to give support to teachers;
- teachers are on the foreground;
- they complement existing forms by fulfilling special educational needs;
- they utilize consultation and collective problem solving;
- it means collaborative support in understanding problems and designing alternative interventions;
- they enable staff to develop confidence and competence to help learners with special educational needs;
- they offer an indirect mechanism for supporting pupils, through supporting teachers.

It is important to know that *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* are voluntary, schools may choose whether or not to adopt them and teachers may choose whether or not to make

use of them. The teams are informal and thus not part of the formal assessment process. These teams are supportive and provide no threat to the competence of any teacher. Teachers should feel free to make use of this support without being afraid to expose their need for help (Daniels *et al.*, 1993: 170).

To summarize:
A *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is an existing team in the school whose members should be trained to act as a resource for assistance to other staff members. This is mainly a problem-solving team, which provides assistance on the whole spectrum of needs of all teachers in that specific school.

Although Daniels et al. (1993: 169) stated that the *Teacher Support Team (TST)* is an example of school-based development to give support to teachers, the focus of the present study is on support and not development as the main function of the *Teacher Support Team (TST).* During training workshops for the establishment of *Teacher Support Teams (TST's)* the term, *Teacher Support and Development Team (TSDT),* was used rather than *Teacher Support Team (TST).* In the present study the term, *Teacher Support Team (TST),* will still be used, as the emphasis lies on *support.*

In the present study the abbreviation *TST* will further on be used instead of *Teacher Support Team.*

1.6.5 Training

Training in this respect is synonymous with empowerment and the provision of skills. The *Support Team* members have to be skilled in working in a collegial supportive roll (Moore *et al.*, 1993: 202). This is thus skills training and not theoretical learning of abstract concepts. It is, as said by Senge (1997: 142), *...not ... acquiring more information, but expanding the ability to produce the results we truly want in life.* As these team members have to provide support in a practical way, the training should be practical. In many schools where some sort of *Support Team* already has been established, the training has been done through in-service workshops. Examples of the latter are the *Support Teams in New Zealand schools* (Moore *et al.*, 1993: 193-204), the *Instructional Support Teams of Pennsylvania* (Kovleski *et al.*, 1996: 44-47), the five(5) studies of *Teacher Assistance Teams* of Chalfrant and Pysh (1989: 49-58), and the *Learning Strategies Project* in Riverside County, California (Feldman, 1990: 117-125).

Figure 1.1 on the next page is a diagrammatic representation of the concept of training as used in the present study. It indicates which parts need training and the function there-of.

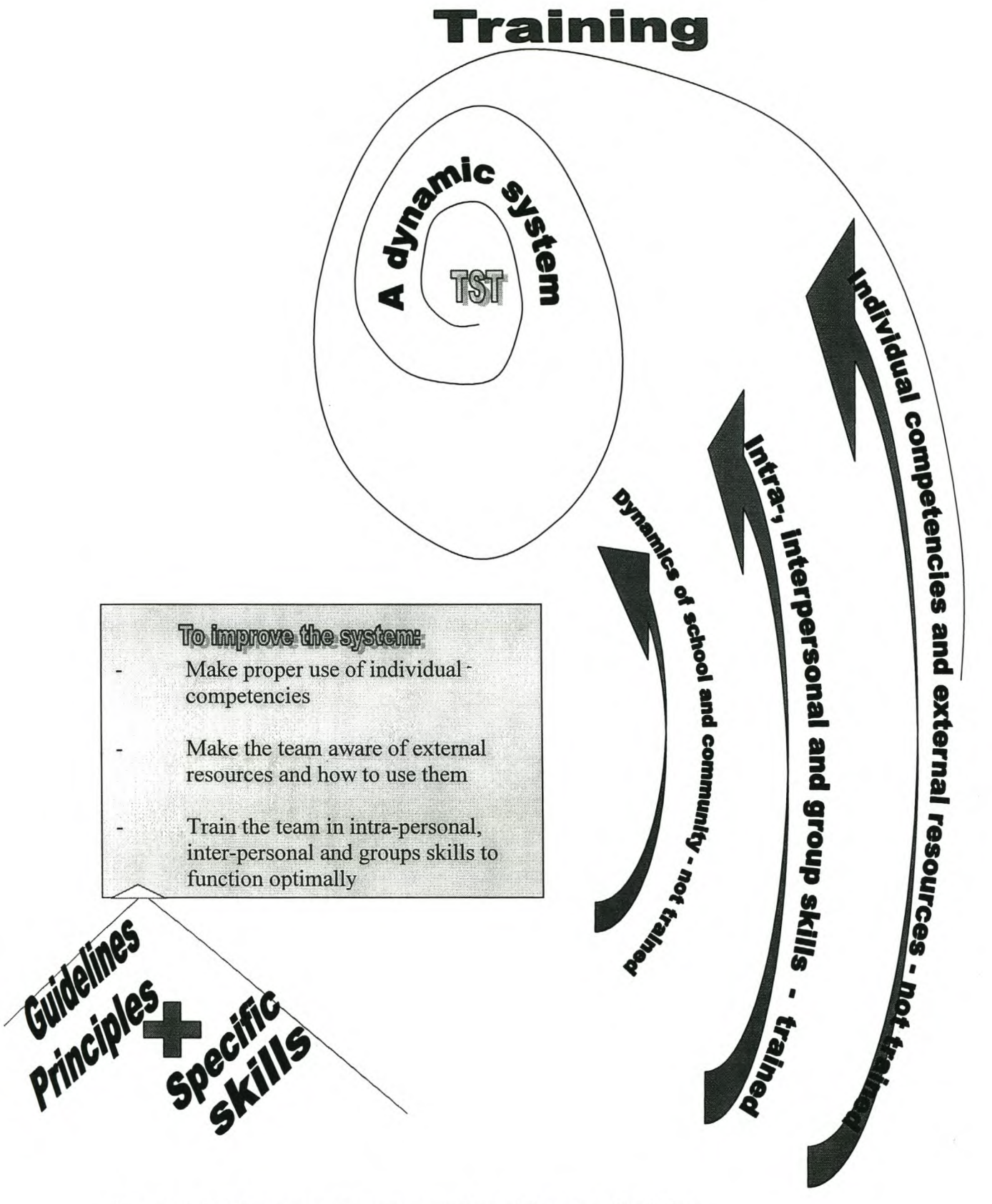


Figure 1.1: Diagrammatic representation of the role of training

1.6.6 Guidelines

This research will not provide a blueprint for training. There will be suggestions for training, therefore only guidelines from which training manuals can be compiled according to each *TST's* needs, will be supplied. The emphasis will be on the necessary skills to be trained in accordance to the needs of *Teacher Support Team* members. Only a few suggestions on how the training may be administered will be given. These guidelines are thus suggestions for training, which can lead to a definite training plan or manual. Daniels (Daniels *et al.*, 1993: 170) stated their suggestions for training: *A key premise was that each school was to develop its own particular style of TST operation within very broad guidelines.* Thus different co-ordinators of *TST's* may adapt these guidelines to their particular circumstances.

Figure 1.2 on the next page is a representation of the conceptual framework of a *TST* as used in the present study.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: DIAGRAMMATIC

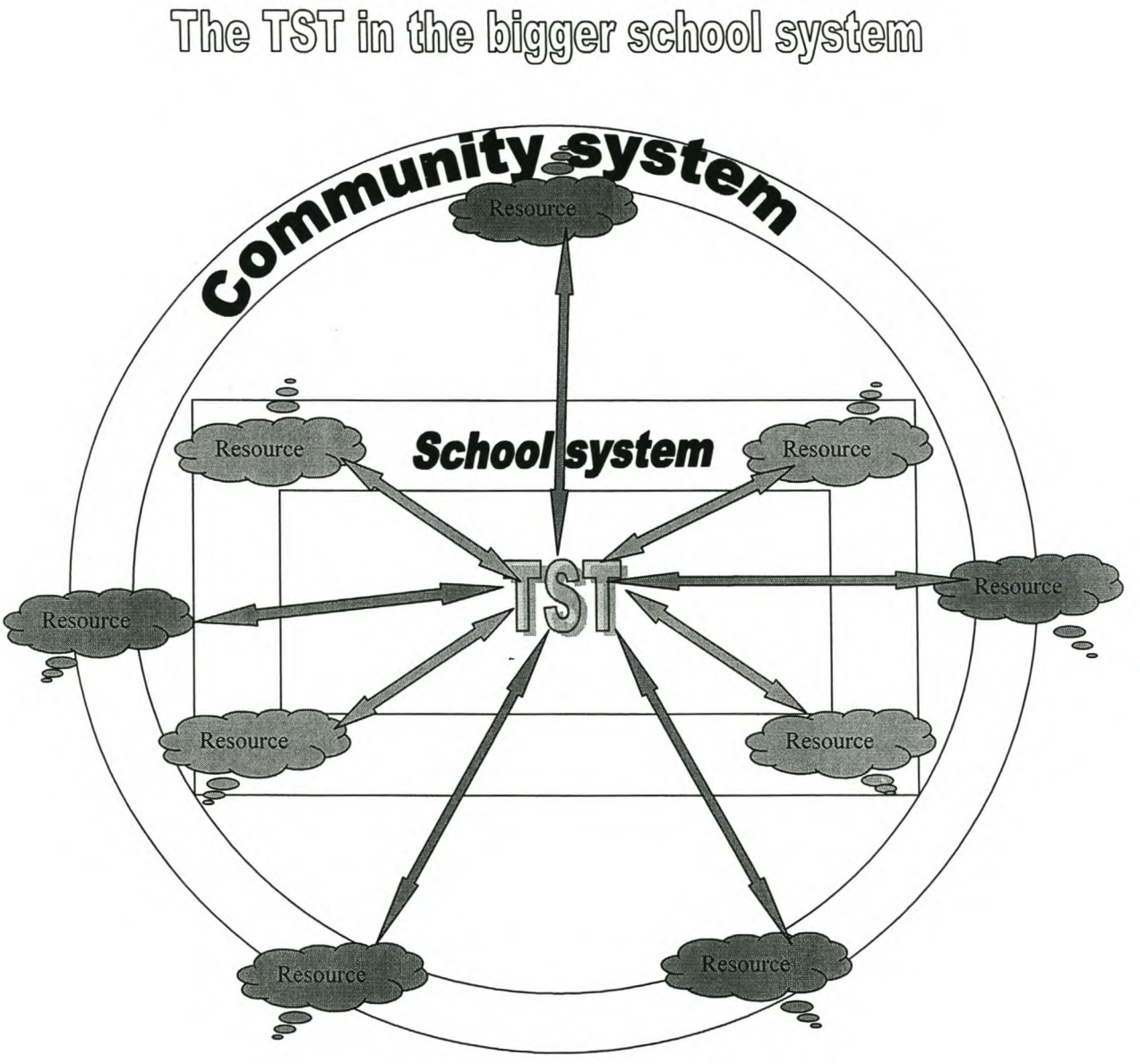


Figure 1.2: Conceptual framework: diagrammatic

1.8 CONCLUSION

This review of the research process and related concepts, will be followed by the literature study in Chapter 2. The literature study will include a detailed discussion of the skills needed by *TST* members to ensure the effective functioning of the team. A list of skills will be given and each skill will be discussed. These skills will be related to its function and role in the *TST*. Some attention will be paid to suitable training methods when implementing a skills training program. These will only be guidelines, which each school or *TST* may adapt to suit their own needs.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING

2.1.1 Value of training

To indicate the value of training, the importance thereof for the effectiveness of support teams, will be stated below.

According to Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989: 55) there are certain team attributes which influence team performance. One of these attributes is team members who are well trained in team operation procedures. Training should not only include operational issues, but also skills training. Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989: 56) found that team members perceived their school-based team as effective when, amongst other factors, team members possessed professional and interpersonal skills. Hayek and Schram & Semmel in Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989: 57) stated: *Teams need to be trained. Without proper training, teams tend to be inefficient and ineffective.* According to McGlothlin in Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989: 57) ongoing training of teams provides them with fresh perspectives and contribute to the longevity of the teams.

In the research of Graden, Casey and Bronstrom (1985: 494) resistance to consultation models was common. They experienced that in the schools where the model was successful, the consultants (facilitators) were more skilled and their training in consultation was better than in schools where the model failed.

In a series of questions answered about the functioning of support teams in Georgia schools, a question about *factors which limit effectiveness* of the team came up. The two factors are, lack of training and burnout of members (Smith, 1999: 2).

Campher (1998: 31) also stated training of teachers in team related skills, as one of the important requirements for a *TST* to function optimally.

It is thus apparent that training is valuable for the successful functioning of teams.

2.1.2 Methods of training

Literature proved a variety of training methods for different support and other teams to be efficient. Salas, Prince, Baker, and Shrestha (1995: 134), for example, differentiated between training methods for communication and those for team knowledge. They found that practice of skills and feedback is critical for training transfer. In *TST* training the above may be applied as to the practice of skills and usage of feedback in optimizing the acquiring of the necessary skills. It is important that training should be practical and skills should be practiced, as stated above. *Training should be directed toward understanding the team concept and providing hands-on experience...* (Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh, 1989: 57).

Often different training methods are used to train the same team. Dyers (1984: 316) stated that instructional techniques which are most effective for training different skills should be determined. According to Dyers (1984: 316) it is highly unlikely that one procedure will satisfy all training requirements for a particular team.

The following is one example of training methods used to train a specific team:

Staff support groups in consultation: workshops with lectures, discussions and practical work

The research of Stringer, Stow, Powell and Louw (1992: 87-96) describes a programme to train facilitators of school based staff support groups in consultation.
They made use of five workshops over three days. The skills involved in establishing and facilitating a school based consultation group were taught through structured activities, talks, discussion and the experience of participating in a consultation group. Complementary to the workshops were three training manuals: an introductory manual, a facilitator manual and a tutor's manual. These were used respectively for *talking about consultation*, for participants, and to equip tutors to run the training course (*Stringer et al.*, 1992: 92). These guidelines for training are important for the training of *TST's*, because it will empower the school system to train new *TST's* in the same school, community, and / or district.

A briefing preceded every course for principals and members of staff. This is an important step in the clarification of expectations and response to queries (Stringer *et al.*, 1992: 92).

In a post-course questionnaire participants responded in the following way. They indicated that they enjoyed the balance between workshop activities, talks, discussion and consultation groups.

The following comments on the training are an indication of the qualities such a training programme should possess: *Very supportive atmosphere, never threatening, but thought provoking, I want to try it immediately, direct relevance to work in school* (Stringer *et al.*, 1992: 93).

Generally this training course removed stress and confusion about how to facilitate groups. Although a realistic caution remained; possible difficulties as well as ways of managing them were discussed (Stringer *et al.*, 1992: 93).

The reactions of participants to the training program above can be a guide to training of *TST's* in South Africa. Participants should have similar experiences in our training workshops.

2.2 SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS SHOULD POSSESS CERTAIN SKILLS

2.2.1 Introduction

Training should be specific and effective. Literature provides specific skills in which the members of *TST's* should be trained.

According to Thies-Sprinthall et al. in *Guidelines for Establishing Teacher Groups* potential leaders of *Support Teams* should have the following skills: knowledge and experience in group leadership, listening skills (e.g. reflection on feelings, summarizing and paraphrasing), non-verbal communication skills, a confident and cheerful demeanor, a sense of humor, transparency of own experience and specific leadership training because these groups need a competent leader (1990: 19-22).

In the research of Kovaleski *et al.* (1996: 44-47) on *Instructional Support Teams* in Pennsylvania schools, the following were mentioned about the training of *Support Team* members.

They used training consultants to train *Support Team* members on-site in the schools. The team members received specialized training in the following: collaboration and team building (including problem solving), instructional assessment, instructional adaptation, student discipline and student assistance strategies (Kovaleski *et al.*, 1996: 46).

According to the nature of the *Support Team* as found by Moore et al. (1993: 195) the following should also be incorporated in the training of core team members: assessment and evaluation techniques, problem-solving techniques and planning.

2.2.2 Core skills and attitudes

2.2.2.1 Core skills

Each team member needs the core skills of communication and the ability to create the relationships required for the tasks of teaching, counselling, advocacy, assertiveness and conciliation. They must be adaptable and confident in working with a variety of methods (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96).

2.2.2.2 Attitudes

Attitudes about learning difficulties should change as ineffective methods of addressing the problem have changed. Relationships which are positive, consider what students may become and accept the person, while being realistic about the task to be achieved, have to be developed. Relationships with teachers and learners must lead to empowerment, self-advocacy and increased opportunities for interaction with the rest of the community (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96). As Camphor (1998: 14) stated, the *TST* has to have a systemic approach, incorporating the whole system - the home, school and community.

2.2.3 Specialist skills and roles

Each team member has specialist skills in relation to their particular area of expertise. Expertise needs to be shared in the group to ensure proper functioning of the team. A clear understanding of roles, professional identity and responsibility promotes the effective sharing of expertise. The differentiation of role is reflected through the participation of different experts as well as mainstream teachers in the *Support Team*.

> *The team becomes more than the sum of its parts to the extent that it can share the skills and develop and incorporate the expertise represented by colleagues both within and outside the school* (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96).

Figure 2.1 is a diagram adapted form a model of a *TST* where the expertise of different members has been used in the functioning of the *TST*. This is the model of B.A. Johnson (1997) which was used as part of the training prior to establishing *TST's* in the Western Cape, done by the University of Stellenbosch (1999).

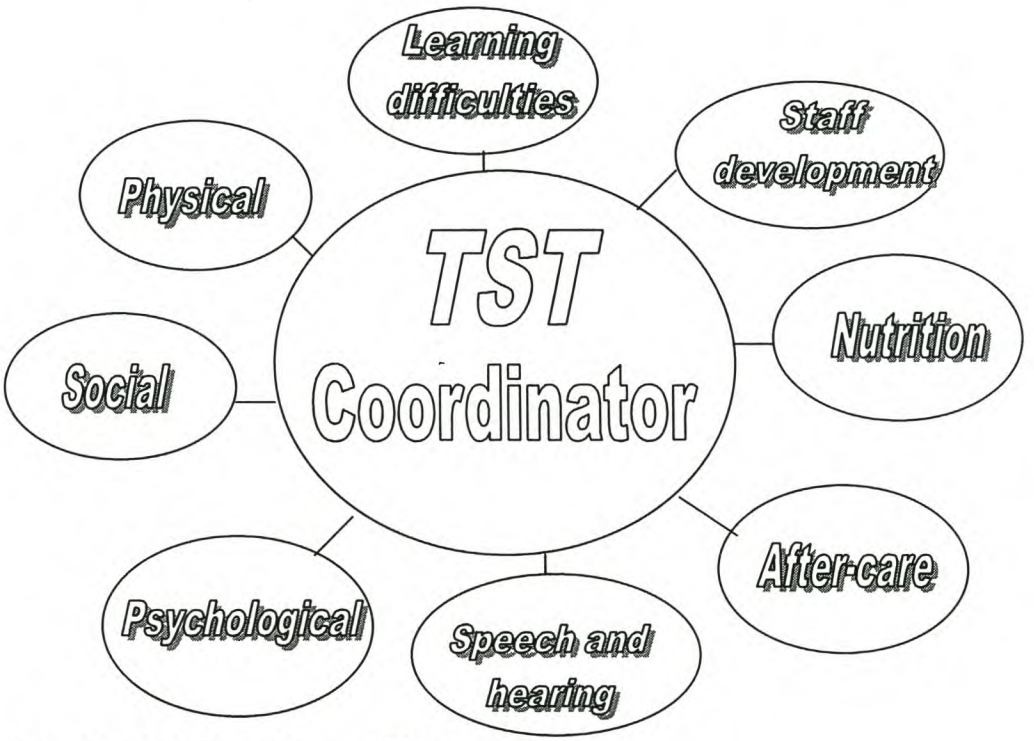


Figure 2.1: Adapted B.A. Johnson *TST* model

When members of the *TST* know themselves well enough, they are aware of their own boundaries. They become aware of the limitations of their own professionalism and are able to judge when to seek alternative help, how much of the alternative expertise to use and when to refer back for supervision and confirmation of their own efforts (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96-97). Through skills training members may enrich their self-knowledge to be aware of these boundaries and limitations.

2.2.4 Common skills needed by Support Team members

2.2.4.1 Introduction

According to literature reviewed these are the most common skills needed by members of a Support Team to ensure its optimal functioning.

The most common skills are: group leadership, listening skills, communication skills (Thies-Sprinthall *et.al.*, 1990: 19-22), counselling, group facilitation, assessment techniques, evaluation techniques, problem-solving, planning (Moore *et al.*, 1993: 195; Stringer et al., 1992: 87-96; Graden *et al.*, 1985: 381), and collaboration (Kovaleski *et. al.*, 1996: 46; Graden *et al.*, 1985: 381).

Skills trained in the training programme of *Staff Consultation Groups* of Stringer *et al.* (1992: 92) were: the nature of support, selection of members, nature of meetings, ground rules, appropriate concerns, inter-personal skills, problem management, and common pitfalls. All these form part of "*the whole process of setting up a group*" Stringer *et al.* (1992: 92). The research of Stringer et al. (1992: 95) also proved continuing evaluation of teams useful for facilitators and group members. In this manner they could come to a fuller understanding at how best to develop their work in the schools.

In the present study the skills found in the literature are divided into four main groups, namely: systems thinking skills, intra-personal skills, inter-personal skills and group or team skills. The following is a short explanation of each one of these skill areas as applied in the current research and to *TST's.*

2.2.4.2 The school as a learning organization: systems theory

The reality of teaching is that the autonomy and effectiveness of the individual teacher are significantly affected by the nature of the school as a whole (Dyson, 1990: 123). It is therefore important for the team members to understand that the school works as an organization. The systems theory offers a means of understanding complex social organizations, ...*the potential of systems thinking is enormous* (Dyson, 1990: 123).

If the school is considered as a system, change in one part of the system will affect changes in the other parts and in the system as a whole. This makes it impossible to consider intervention in one part of the system (school) without influencing or taking into consideration the other parts of the system (school). This view is necessary for long term changes in behaviour (Campher, 1998: 25).

Graden, Casey and Christenson (1985a: 379) used a consultation model in their pre-referral intervention program. Their model assumes the adoption of an ecological perspective of viewing student difficulties in the classroom. The numerous factors that affect student learning and behaviour difficulties are assessed, analyzed, and taken into account in intervention planning. An understanding of systems theory (understanding the process of change, understanding systems variables in classrooms, schools, etc.) is one of four important skill areas which they see as essential to implementing a consultation model. The important skill areas of Graden *et al.* (1985: 383) also include: inter-personal skills, problem-solving skills and content expertise. In the present study only the systems understanding and inter-personal skill areas of Graden et al. (1985: 383) have been used.

To summarize the systems theory as used in the present study, the following: nothing exists and functions as an isolated entity without being influenced by its context. One cannot understand anything, nor the dynamics thereof, without viewing it within the context in which it exists. Nothing can change or develop

without influencing and being influenced by all the other parts of the system as well as the system as a whole.

2.2.4.3 Intra-personal skills

In the research of Stringer *et al.* (1992: 93) certain personal qualities of facilitators of consultation teams were listed through a pre-questionnaire for teacher facilitators. These qualities are the following: sympathetic and supportive towards colleagues, uncritical, effective listener, patience, understanding, committed, enthusiastic, empathetic and not belonging to staff factions. Stringer *et al.* (1992: 95) also commented on *how the enthusiasm and commitment of facilitators and group members are key factors in the success of a group.* Members should thus be motivated and generally positive persons.
Therefore intra-personal skills are the personal qualities of *TST* members. As seen in the above these qualities do affect the effective functioning of a team.

To function effectively classroom teachers also need help with intra-personal issues. *As one (West Berlin) teacher put it: 'Practical tips are of no use here ... these encounters with difficult pupils in the classroom ... they confront me with myself ... that is where one needs help ...'* (Hanko, 1993: 175).

If these are the areas in which teachers need help, the *TST* should be trained to provide, or at least understand, these skills.

2.2.4.4 Inter-personal skills

Interpersonal skills is another one of four important skill areas essential to implementing a consultancy model of Graden *et al.* (1985a: 383) used in the present research. Examples of these skills according to Graden *et al.* (1985a: 383) are: communication skills, rapport building, listening skills, and effective questioning techniques.

In this study inter-personal skills concern issues and qualities related to the relationship between members of the *TST* themselves and also between *TST* members and the school and / or wider community.

2.2.4.5 Team / group skills

The following characteristics of effective teams (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329) indicate important skills for training.

Group leadership. Ideal results would often be obtained within an atmosphere of shared leadership. Here each member can feel free to contribute to the process.

Planning activities. Adequate planning should even be done before a meeting begins. Appropriate decisions should be made about what to discuss and who should participate in the meeting/s.

Agenda setting. The group should know before hand what will be discussed, the order of priority, time allocation for each topic, as well as for the meeting.

Clarifying communication. *Clarity of verbal and nonverbal communication is essential if a team is to function effectively* (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329). Clear communication is every team member's own responsibility. The person who acts as a leader at a particular time may use communication skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing.

Participation of group members. *One of the hallmarks of effective groups is the participation of all members* (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329). Domination by one group member to the expense of others may impair the effective functioning of the team (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329). Group members should thus cooperate with one another.

Conflict management. It is important to handle disagreements among team members effectively. Differing perspectives are a source of creative tension. This may lead to new and better ideas.

Review of group process. Review of process strengths and weaknesses after or during each meeting is important for the improving of future meetings and the process.

In the research of Stringer *et al.* (1992: 93) these factors were listed as likely to influence the successful running of a group. These factors concerning the *Staff Consultation Groups* of Stringer *et al.* (1992: 87-96) are: management support, times of meetings, enthusiasm of the facilitator/s, staff interest, dealing with dominant members and projecting a positive image of the group.

Guzzo, Salas and Associates (1995: 336-337) describe a competent team as follows:

> *Essentially, team competencies can be thought of as being separate and distinct from individual competencies ... team competencies can be thought of as (1) the requisite knowledge, principles, and concepts underlying the team's effective task performance; (2) the repertoire of required skills and behaviors necessary to perform the team task effectively; and (3) the appropriate attitudes on the part of team members (about themselves and the team) that foster effective team performance.*

For a *TST* to be effective it should reflect most of the characteristics of an effective team. To ensure team members are aware of these characteristics it should be included in the skills to be trained in a training program.

In the present research a list of skills to be trained was compiled from the literature studied. These are displayed in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Diagram of skills divided in four different skill areas

SYSTEMS THINKING SKILLS		
INTRA-PERSONAL SKILLS	**INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS**	**GROUP SKILLS**
1. Problem solving skills 2. Planning skills 3. Decision making skills 4. Motivation techniques 5. Leadership skills 6. Listening skills	1. Communication skills 2. Co-operation 3. Collaboration 4. Consultation skills 5. Counselling skills	1. Team work skills 2. Evaluation strategies for effective team functioning 3. Guidelines to evaluate training

The following is a detailed discussion of the skills represented in table 2.1 above.

2.3 SYSTEMS THINKING

2.3.1 A definition of systems thinking

> *A cloud masses, the sky darkens, leaves twist upward, and we know that it will rain. We also know that after the storm, the runoff will feed into groundwater miles away, and the sky will grow clear by tomorrow. All these events are distant in time and space, and yet they are all connected within the same pattern. Each has an influence on the rest, an influence that is usually hidden from view. You can only understand the system of a rainstorm by contemplating the whole, not any individual part of the pattern* (Senge, 1997: 6-7).

Systems thinking takes in account the context in which individual behaviour occurs. The behaviour of one component within a system affects and is affected by other components of the system (Dowling & Osborne, 1985: 10). One component's behaviour may also be affected by the dynamics of the system as a whole, as the whole is bigger than the sum of the individual components.

> *Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively* (Senge, 1997: 7).

2.3.2 The Teacher Support Team as a system

According to Brown (1993: 84-85) a group acts upon and responds to different environments. The group itself is one of the environments. It is moulded by the values, thinking and behaviour of each of its members. Thus the functioning of the *TST* will also depend on the interrelations of members' values, thinking, behaviour, knowledge and skills. As in a system the different parts are interrelated. The whole is bigger than its individual parts.

The physical and social environments of the individual group members influence their (the members) way of thinking and doing (Brown, 1993: 84). The members are also part of other systems outside of the *TST*. According to Brown (1993: 84) the relationship of the group (*TST*) to the environment is a systemic one. The group is thus a sub-system of one or more environments.

2.3.3 The school as a system: The Learning Organization

This research makes use of Senge's (1997: 14) concept of the *The Learning Organization* in relation to schools and eventually also to *TST's* as part of the school system.

Before describing *The Learning Organization* Senge (1997: 14) wrote the following about learning:

> *Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we reperceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning. It is, as ... fundamental to human beings as the sex drive.*

Thus the *The Learning Organization* is any organization, also a school, that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. Therefore, an organization should not be satisfied with mere survival: thus *survival- or adaptive learning*. It should be learning to enhance its capacity to create ...*generative learning* (Senge, 1997: 14).

According to Senge (1997: 12) systems thinking clarifies the subtlest aspect of the learning organization - the new way individuals perceive themselves and their world. This shift of mind - from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world - is at the heart of *The Learning Organization. A learning organization* is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality and how they can change it. People move from seeing problems as caused by someone or something *out there* to seeing how their own actions create the problems they experience (Senge, 1997: 12-13).

The school should be such a place where true learning takes place. The school should be a *Learning Organization* where members (especially members of the staff) think systemically. All employees in the school system should understand their problems in the context of the whole. The learners should also be taught in such a paradigm. They should be trained to understand their personal, social and academic problems as part of a bigger system.

INTRA-PERSONAL SKILLS

2.4 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

2.4.1 Problem solving skills: a brief definition

Problem solving as defined by different models of Gutkin and Curtis and Bergan (in Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 327) *is intended to maximize the probability that people will generate the best available solution when faced with a presenting problem.*

2.4.2 Guidelines

The following are general problem solving guidelines applied to the *TST,* which is a problem solving team by nature. These guidelines may be adapted by any *TST* to suit its own situation.

Elliot (in Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 327) developed some problem solving guidelines for teams to facilitate meetings. The following eight steps can serve as a blueprint for working through problem solving meetings that involve a collection of professionals and parents.

The eight steps for problem solving meetings are:

STEP 1 DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE PROBLEM

- Members state the problem in concrete, explicit terms.
- Avoid vagueness and ambiguity.
- Discuss appropriate goals for each relevant aspect of the problem.

STEP 2 ANALYZE THE CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

- Share assessment information if available (like test scores).
- Integrate this information to develop an understanding of (a) the child's strengths and weaknesses and (b) the factors in his/her environment that influence the problem. This can be adapted to the kind of problem handled at that moment, be it a child or teaching difficulties.

STEP 3 BRAINSTORM ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Follow these four rules for brainstorming for high-quality solutions:
  - try to generate as many solutions as possible
  - think creatively
  - withhold value judgments at this stage
  - examine and combine various alternatives to form even more possible solutions.

STEP 4 CHOOSE AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES

- Review the possible solutions critically.
- After careful consideration of all the solutions, select those which are the most appropriate.

STEP 5 SPECIFY RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME LINES

- Specify clearly everyone's responsibilities.
- Set time lines.

STEP 6 OBTAIN CONSENSUS OF TEAM

- There should be consensus amongst all members about further action.
- If there is lack of consensus, repeat previous steps.

STEP 7 FUTURE ACTIONS ON UNADDRESSED PROBLEMS

- Problems usually have multiple facets.
- Explicitly discuss the process of handling future or other problems.

STEP 8 FOLLOW-UP

- About two to six weeks after a plan has been implemented.
- This provides an opportunity for adjusting intervention plans and also provides team members with feedback about their decisions.

The communications approaches (Watzlawick, in Becvar & Becvar, 1996: 213) uses these steps in a more compact version. This may also be applied to problem solving sessions of the *TST*. The steps used by the communications approaches are as follows:

STEP 1 Define the problem in clear and concrete terms.
STEP 2 Investigate all solutions to the problem previously attempted.
STEP 3 Define the change to be achieved in clear and concrete terms.
STEP 4 Formulate and implement a strategy for change.

The above are two possibilities of problem-solving models, which may be implemented by a *TST*. These are only guidelines, which may be adapted to suit a specific *TST's* needs. Other problem solving strategies are those of Covey (1992) and De Bono (1996). Although any of these may be used and adapted to suit the needs of a *TST*, all of these will not be discussed in detail in the present study.

2.5 PLANNING SKILLS

2.5.1 Planning skills: a brief definition

According to Edward de Bono (1996: 120) our plans fail many times in the modern fast moving world, which forms our current reality. The failure of plans should not lead to non-planning. We should change our planning strategies to incorporate the possibility of changing situations and uncertainty. De Bono (1996: 120) defines a plan as follows:

> *A plan can be regarded as a 'main stream' in which certain things are going to be done at certain times.*

A plan should thus present broad, flexible guidelines to follow for action towards a specific goal.

2.5.2 A model for effective planning

As a model for effective planning this study makes use of the principles of Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,* as applied by Stephen Covey and Roger Merrill in *First Things First* (Covey & Merrill, 1994).

We live and function in an interdependent reality, especially in problem solving groups like the *TST*. In the *TST* we have a shared vision to find an effective solution for our problem/s. As people work together to accomplish any task the following five elements are usually present:

- Desired results
- Guidelines
- Resources
- Accountability
- Consequences

It is upon these five elements that Covey and Merrill (1994: 222-227) built their *win-win stewardship agreements* which is applied here as principles for proper planning.
A definition of stewardship as used by Covey and Merrill (1994: 129) is now important:

> *A stewardship is a trust. A steward is 'one called to exercise responsible care over possessions entrusted to him or her.' We're stewards over our*

> *time, our talents, our resources. We have stewardships at work, in the community, and at home.*

As the team seeks effectively to carry out a shared vision, the value of synergistic roles and goals become apparent. When the individuals see how each one's role contributes to the whole, they may use the win-win stewardship agreements to create synergy.

> *These agreements represent the critical juncture of people and possibilities. This is where personal and organizational missions are married* ...(Covey & Merrill, 1994: 224-225).

The value of the stewardship agreement lies in its marked departure from traditional delegation where tasks are usually only dumped on others. With stewardship agreements a partnership is created to accomplish together first things first. Then people feel involved and not only *dumped on* (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 223-224).
In the process of problem solving and planning for action, the team should go through the process of handling each of the above mentioned five elements of the win-win stewardship agreement. The following is a discussion of these five elements:

1 SPECIFY DESIRED RESULTS

> *What is it we're trying to do? What outcomes do we want – both quantitative and qualitative – and by when?*
>
> The desired results are the shared vision of the team. This is what all of the members want to achieve at the end of the process, the statement of what is important. It is also important to decide on what to do to empower the group to produce the desired results in future as well. The group should also make sure that they state results and not methods at this time. It is in the statement of results where the goals and strategies are aligned with the overall mission.

2 SET GUIDELINES

What are the parameters within which we're trying to do it? What are the essential values, policies, legalities, ethics, limits, and levels of initiative to be aware of in going after the desired results?

It is important to identify guidelines other than the known policies and procedures. This can avoid many major problems, like how much initiative each member of the group can take to achieve his/her specific result/task.

Examples of guidelines are:

- Principles for achieving the desired results
- Organizational / operational principles that underly policies
- Things not to do
- Levels of initiative

As the level of initiative to be taken is a common problem, I present the following six levels of initiative by Covey and Merrill (1994: 225):

- Wait until told
- Ask
- Recommend
- Act and report immediately
- Act and report periodically
- Act on own

Different levels of initiative may be necessary for different functions and will also change as capability and trust differ and/or increase. The important thing is to match the member's capacity and function with the proper level of initiative.

3 IDENTIFY AVAILABLE RESOURCES

What do we have to work with? What budgetary, systemic, and human help is available and how do we access it? (Covey & Merril, 1994: 226)

These are the financial, human, technical, and organizational resources we have available to help the team to reach their goal or results. This is also about how to access the resources, how to work with others that use the same resources and what the limits are.

Team members must be aware not to overlook their resources within, the members themselves. These are the personal qualities, talents and expertise of individual members.

4 DEFINE ACCOUNTABILITY

How do we measure what we're doing? What criteria will indicate the accomplishment of the desired results? Will they be measurable, observable, or discernible, or some combination of the three? To whom are we accountable? When will the accountability process take place? (Covey & Merril, 1994: 226)

Accountability deals with how the team knows what it is doing. This means team members have to be accountable for the execution of their actions / tasks. Here the details of communication (report and feedback) are spelled out as well as how the results will be measured. Every member should evaluate him- or herself against the desired results. Feedback given directly to every member is very important here.

5 DETERMINE THE CONSEQUENCES

Why are we trying to do it? What are the natural and logical consequences of accomplishing or not accomplishing the desired result? (Covey & Merril, 1994: 226)

Covey and Merrill (1994: 226) stated two kinds of consequences, namely; natural and logical. Natural consequences deal with what naturally happens if the team does or does not achieve the desired results. Logical consequences could include things such as compensation, opportunities for advancement, enlarged or

diminished stewardships or discipline. All consequences, positive and negative, should be considered. (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 222-227)

The forgoing are guidelines, which may be used by a *TST* in the planning process.

The following are eight(8) steps to use in a planning session. It is incorporated in strategic planning, which is *a method of efficiently pursuing a single set of goals* (Yanoff, in Silberman, 1992: 411). This strategic planning procedure may be used by a *TST* to achieve their desired outcomes.

Yanoff (in Silberman, 1992: 413) set the eight(8) steps as follows:

STEP 1 ASSSES POSSIBLE GOALS

- Several goals to be pursued should be considered.

STEP 2 SELECT AND CLARIFY A GOAL

- Before committing to a goal it should be cleared and selected carefully.

STEP 3 IDENTIFY OBSTACLES TO GOAL ATTAINMENT

- First make sure of everything which can prevent you from attaining your goal before any action is taken.

STEP 4 DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

- Generate ways to overcome the identified obstacles.

STEP 5 DEVISE FINAL ACTION STEPS

- Specify all the actions to reach your goal.

STEP 6 IMPLEMENT FINAL PLAN

- Carry out the final plan using all the necessary resources.

STEP 7 EVALUATE PLAN

- Assess outcomes as well as the process.

STEP 8 TRY AGAIN

- Start to plan again using information and results from the previous experience.

2.6 DECISION MAKING SKILLS

2.6.1 Introduction

According to Langley (1994: 51), in his discussion of *Cooperative Development,* participants in any problem solving team should debate about decision making, since they all need guidance in this respect. They need to be helped to become aware of the range of possible choices best suited to their situation. Clients (or in this case, participants in the *TST)* need to be guided to discover for themselves their s*elf-deception*, regarding incorrect choices and actions.

Therefore some training in decision making techniques is necessary for members of the *TST.*

According to Ivancevich and Matteson (1996: 527) decisions are rather a means than end. These are mechanisms through which an attempt is made to achieve a desired state.

2.6.2 Decision making skills: a brief definition

In accordance with the introduction above, the present study defines decision making as: *the consideration of as many as possible possibilities to reach your goal.* The best possibility should then be used. This will help to reach that goal or objective. *Effective decision making* is finding the *best* means of reaching your goal or objective. To make a decision (making choice) is thus a process and not a mere action.

2.6.3 Decision making as seen by Covey and Merrill

> *We're constantly making choices about the way we spend our time, ... We're also living with the consequences of those choices* (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 17).

As the *TST* is also a problem-solving team and has to make choices between different ways to react or handle a given problem, they surely have to live with the consequences of their decisions.

The first two influences on our decisions to be discussed are Covey and Merril's *clock* and *compass.* The *clock* represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals, activities, how we cope with these and how we manage our time. The *compass* represents our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction – what we feel is important (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 19).

Therefore to make the best decision we have to fill the little time we have to solve the problem with those things, which we (the participants in the *TST*) feel are of the highest priority. Many people fill their available time with things which are not really important. In the same way the participants in the *TST* might waste valuable time on issues which are not really important. They may try to find quick fixes instead of looking for deep chronic causes.

As for the *clock* and the *compass*, we should make decisions to fill our time with things which are deeply important to us. It is not about getting more done in less time, but to do what matters most and do that well (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 23).

> *Anything less than a conscious commitment to the important is an unconscious commitment to the unimportant* (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 32).

The importance paradigm is about knowing and doing what is important rather than simply responding to what is urgent. Whether the team members are operating from a paradigm of urgency or one of importance has a profound effect on the results they will get. It is important to realize that urgency itself is not the problem, only when it dominates the important factors. *...in our day-to-day decision making, one of these factors tends to dominate. The problem comes when we operate primarily from a paradigm of urgency rather than a paradigm of importance* (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 39). When we only react on things to be done urgently, we only relieve some of the acute pain. When the *TST* members make choices based on urgency their reactions and support rendered will only be a quick fix and at the end the pain will remain. It will be the wrong choice (Covey & Merrill, 1994: 19 – 42).

2.6.4 Decision making using De Bono's CoRT thinking programme

To assist the members of the *TST* in their decision making process, the breadth tools of De Bono's *CoRT thinking programme* can be of good use. *CoRT* is only one possibility which the *TST* can incorporate in their decision making process. The following is a discussion of some of these tools that might be used to make the decision making process easier.

CAF: CONSIDER ALL FACTORS

When a decision has to be made, we sometimes need first to consider all the possible factors, which influence our situation or choice. The intention here is to be as complete as possible, to consider all factors rather than just looking at them in terms of favourable or unfavourable factors (De Bono, 1996: 68).

PMI: PLUS, MINUS, INTERESTING

Instead of deciding whether or not you like an idea, this tool leads you to consider positive, negative as well as interesting points of an idea. It enlarges the view of a situation which would usually be narrowed by emotional reactions (De Bono, 1996: 18-19). When all factors have been considered, each one can be scrutinized according to its positive, negative and interesting points.

C&S: CONSEQUENCES AND SEQUEL

Here a deliberate decision has to be made to foresee consequences of the choice made. It will prevent the team members to make an urgent choice without properly foreseeing the consequences there-of. C&S deals with what may happen after the decision has been made (De Bono, 1996: 69). This tool tests the decision made against its ability to fulfil in the team's future needs.

AGO: AIMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES

The point here is to emphasize purpose. In making decisions it is important to know what our general direction (aim) is. Then we should define our ultimate destination (goal) and then come to know the recognizable points of achievement along the way (De Bono, 1996: 115). Decisions should be made to keep the team on the right track towards their aim and goal, following the path of their objectives.

FIP: FIRST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

This is a contraction tool. It organizes ideas, factors, objectives, and consequences to note their relative importance. *FIP* is used after other tools like; *PMI, CAF* and *C&S. FIP* is a subjective judgement tool. Here Covey and Merril's important versus urgent

choices should be taken into consideration too (Covey & Merril, 1994: 32-40). Decisions on certain actions to be taken by the team should thus be organized from those, which need immediate attention to those which may be dealt with later.

APC: ALTERNATIVES, POSSIBILITIES, CHOICES

This is also an antidote to emotional reaction. It will lead us to go beyond our natural explanations and choices in a situation. It is to ask, *What else might have happened here?* (De Bono, 1996: 31).

OPV: OTHER PEOPLE'S VIEWS

This tool will help members to cooperate and to broaden their own views by considering other's views too. In this way members' views may be broadened and situations may be looked at in new ways. This is an anti-dote to self-centredness (De Bono, 1996: 85). The team might ask other people outside the team for their opinions on a specific issue.

DECISIONS

This tool brings together a number of other tools to help us make proper decisions. In the *TST* this will be the main tool to use in decision making. The members have to know all the other ones to use this tool. The following tools are brought together in a suggested sequence:

FIP: for assessing priorities;
AGO: for clarifying and considering all factors involved;
CAF: for purposefully considering all factors involved;
C&S: for discovering consequences;
PMI: for assessing the decision once it has been made.

By using the general guidelines of Covey and Merrill and applying the tools of De Bono's CoRT thinking program in practice the members of the *TST* might find the decision making process, which follows, easier.

2.6.5 The decision making process

The following process of decision making is not a fixed procedure. It is rather a sequential process than a series of steps. Problems that occur infrequently, with a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the outcome, require the utilization of the whole process. Many of the problems handled by the *TST* will be of this nature. For problems that occur frequently and are less complex and uncertain, the whole process is not necessary.

The following is the decision making process as discussed by Ivancevich and Matteson (1996: 527-533).

STEP 1 ESTABLISHING SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND MEASURING RESULTS

Goals and objectives will dictate what results must be achieved and the measures that indicate whether or not they have been achieved.

STEP 2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION

Without problems decisions are not necessary. A problem is a gap between the desired state and the current reality.

STEP 3 ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

The significance of the problem must be determined.

STEP 4 CONSIDERATION OF CAUSES

It is usually difficult to find solutions for problems without knowing the cause/s thereof. Discovering of causes also often lead to a better understanding of the problem.

STEP 5 DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Before a decision is made, feasible alternatives should be developed.

STEP 6 SOLUTION SELECTION

This is the selection of the solution, which will lead to the desired objective. This should not be an isolated act, it leads over into the other following steps. It is a dynamic process.

STEP 7 IMPLEMENTATION

A decision must be effectively implemented, otherwise it remains an abstraction. Implementation implies planning skills.

STEP 8 FOLLOW-UP

This means periodic measurements of results. Here evaluation and assessment skills are necessary.

This process is very much the same as a problem-solving process. Thus decision making and problem solving are interrelated processes, but both of importance to the effective functioning of the *TST.*

Other skills are also included in this process, example planning skills, evaluation- and assessment skills. If these skills are included in the training process, it will improve the *TST's* ability to make decisions. The *TST* can utilize and adapt the tools above as well as the decision making process to suit their own situation. Again these are only broad guidelines.

2.7 MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES

2.7.1 Introduction

For teams to maximize their effectiveness it is critically important to understand motivation. To understand what makes people tick. Like machinery, materials and other parts of a system, human performance can also be improved. Miller and Howard (1994: 135) stated unmotivatedness as an element of the system in which the individual who is unmotivated functions. *The problem is in the system or the environment which is influencing those people* (Miller & Howard, 1994: 135).

2.7.2 Motivation: a brief definition

Motivation can be described as *Won't Do* problems of people within a specific system. It is better understood by comparing it with *Can't Do* problems. If a person is offered lots of money to do a job and still can not do it, it is not a motivational problem, but one of lack-of-skill. On the contrary, if a person is bribed like that, and suddenly does the job, then the problem of human performance is motivational (Miller and Howard, 1994: 135).

Motivation of its members is important for the effective functioning of the *TST*. If the members have a *Won't Do* problem it will inhibit the effective functioning of the team despite the skills of its members.

2.7.3 Identifying corrective action

To improve motivational problems in the *TST*, the causes of these problems may better an understanding of the problems. It can be a guide towards improved motivation.
Motivational problems are *Won't Do* actions. The following questions are steps to identify possible causes and determine appropriate solutions to motivational problems (Miller & Howard, 1994: 137-138):

2.7.3.1 Is good performance punished?

A person's good performance is punished when his or her completing a job quickly and effectively results in getting just another more difficult task. The person may become less motivated to work quickly and efficiently. When certain members in the *TST* are overloaded with work because they get the job done quickly and effectively, they will lose their motivation.

2.7.3.2 Is poor performance reinforced?

If pleasant consequences follow poor performance, a person will become unmotivated. If a person complains of a difficult task and the manager takes over, that person may stop trying to solve the problems independently. If a *TST* member experiences problems with administrative tasks and other members take them over, the one with the problems will not make any effort to overcome this difficulty.

2.7.3.3 Is good performance ignored?

People may become unmotivated if their performance does not receive any attention at all. If nobody responds to a person's own positive initiatives, that person will stop showing initiative, because he or she may believe good initiatives do not matter to anyone.

2.7.3.4 Are there obstacles for good performance?

> People may become less motivated if obstacles make performance more difficult or if expectations for performance are vague or confusing. If *TST* members do not have a specific plan of action with very specific jobs for each member, they will not be motivated to do anything at all.
> (Miller & Howard, 1994: 137-138)

As soon as the performance problem is identified as either *Can't Do* (which is skill related) or *Won't Do* (which is motivational) it is possible to move towards designing a solution. In the case of *Can't Do*, training workshops can be organized to improve the skills needed. Motivational problems (*Won't Do's*) tend to require additional analysis as human behavior is often more complex than it appears on the surface (Miller & Howard, 1994: 138).

> *How might we describe a person's behavior? We might say that he has a bad 'attitude', ... lacks enthusiasm, or is 'impolite'. Have you seen his 'attitude' to determine whether it is good or bad? Have you seen, touched, or measured his ... enthusiasm? No* (Miller & Howard, 1994: 139).

It would be difficult to try to change such a person's *attitude*, which is such an abstract and subjective concept. If one focuses on an individual's behaviour it is more concrete and objective than attitudes which are subjective observations.

The following is a model, which may be used by a *TST* to handle the problem of motivation. Here the focus falls on behaviour, rather than on attitudes. The model is called the A-B-C Model and is represented in figure 2.2.

2.7.4 The A-B-C Model

Figure 2.2: The A-B-C model

An antecedent leads to a certain behaviour. The consequence of this behaviour will determine whether it will continue or not.

The following is a discussion of each part of the A-B-C-model of Miller and Howard (1994: 140-146).

2.7.4.1 Activators

The influences preceding behaviour are Antecedents or Activators. They are the cues, triggers, or stimuli that get behaviour going. For example a graph showing dropping results will activate a discussion on performance (Miller & Howard, 1994: 140).

According to Miller and Howard (1994: 140) the environment provides us constantly with activators. The agenda of a team meeting is an activator to a certain orderly discussion.

2.7.4.2 Behaviour

The "B" in the model stands for the behaviour provoked by the antecedent or activator. Behaviour is performance which can be measured, counted and recorded.

2.7.4.3 Consequences

The best systems of managing performance provide consequences for desired behaviour. The consequences following a certain behaviour will determine whether the behaviour will continue or not.

There are three kinds of consequences: reinforcement, neutral consequences and punishment.

The following is a short statement about the influence on behavior of each one of the mentioned consequences:

2.7.4.4 Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a desirable consequence which will enhance behaviour. Positive feedback to a *TST* member's accomplishments will enhance future positive action of that member.

2.7.4.5 Neutral consequences

Behaviour that is ignored will extinguish. At first the individual might try harder for an award, but soon the behaviour will come to an end if no response is received. If nobody notices a *TST* member's accomplishments, that member will not try to do it again.

2.7.4.6 Punishment

This consequence of behaviour leads to decreased rate of response or behaviour. If a certain action of a *TST* member causes negative feedback from other members, that member will discontinue the negative action (Miller & Howard, 1994: 140-141).

2.7.5 Encouraging desirable behaviour

To increase desirable behaviour means to motivate team members to conduct desirable behaviour.

The following is a list of ways to increase desirable behavior as set by Miller and Howard (1994: 144-146):

2.7.5.1 Change the activators.

Changing of activators (like setting of more sincere goals or motivational talks) often result in temporary improvement. It rarely produces lasting results.

2.7.5.2 Positive reinforcement

The person will achieve a desired consequence following a behaviour. These are positive verbal responses as well as non-verbal responses such as body language or written notes.

2.7.5.3 Frequency

The more often people experience positive reinforcement, the more positive they will feel about there work. *Catch people doing something right!* (Miller & Howard, 1994: 144).

2.7.5.4 Free

According to Miller and Howard (1994: 144) the most effective positive reinforcement is free. This is typically social reinforcement, which is generally positive interaction between people or symbols of recognition and appreciation.

2.7.5.5 Sincere

This is critical. If somebody gives recognition to everybody who passes, it diminishes the power of the reinforcer.

2.7.5.6 Specific

To reinforce a specific behaviour in general might be fine, but the team should know precisely which behaviour was good. This will lead to improvement of that behaviour.

2.7.5.7 Immediate

The longer the delay between behaviour and consequence, the less effective the consequence.

2.7.5.8 Individualize

All people do not like the same things. Identify what is reinforcing to individual team members.

2.7.5.9 Personalize

Telling a person why his or her specific behavior was meaningful to you, makes the recognition more powerful.

2.7.5.10 Proportional

The value of the consequence should be consistent with the value of the performance.

2.7.6 Diagrammatic summary of motivation

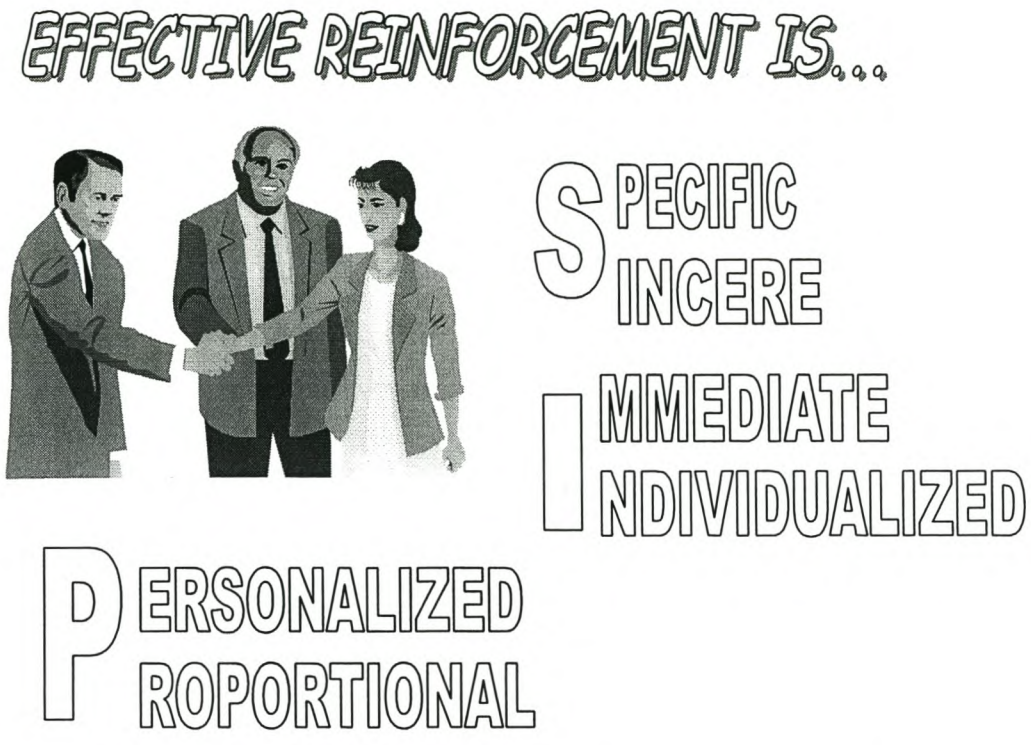


Figure 2.3: Diagrammatic summary of motivation

2.7.7 Conclusion

To motivate is to reinforce desirable behaviour positively. The above is one way to motivate team members to function optimally.

2.8 LEADERSHIP SKILLS

2.8.1 Introduction

The core members of the *TST* should practice leadership as coordinators or facilitators. It is their task to guide the group of teachers seeking help towards a solution for their problem/s.

2.8.2 Definition of leadership

> *The central attribute of leadership is social influence. The leader is the person who has the most impact on group behavior and beliefs. He or she is the one who initiates action, gives orders, makes decisions, settles disputes among group members, offers encouragement, serves as a model, and is in the forefront of group activity* (Sears, Replau & Taylor, 1991: 325).

2.8.3 Ways to become a leader

According to Sears *et al.* (1991: 326) there are three ways in which individuals can become leaders. Some, like leaders in the army, are appointed. Others, like the students' representative council of an university, are elected. In the third process, the person in time develops into a leader. Through interaction with peers or colleges some people appear as informal leaders (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 326). When considering the definition of a *TST* in this study, the latter process (the development of individuals into informal leaders) will most probably yield the core members of the *TST*.

2.8.4 Characteristics of a leader

In leadership training knowing the characteristics of a good leader may be helpful as a guide to the skills to be trained. Sears *et al.* (1991: 326) listed the following characteristics of good leaders:

- They possess abilities that help the group to reach their goals.
- They have interpersonal skills that contribute to successful interaction.
  Examples of such inter-personal skills are:
  - to be cooperative,
  - to be organized,
  - to be articulate,
  - to be interpersonally sensitive and
  - to be able to perceive group needs and to respond to them.
- They have a strong motivation to succeed, they are ambitious, achievers orientated and responsible.

2.8.5 Situations which require leadership

Leadership skills are important in the training of a *TST* if the members will be exposed to situations which require leadership. According to Sears et al. (1991: 326-327) the following situations require leadership skills:

- Situations which require a person through whom nearly all communication can take place.
- Situations requiring a certain kind of expertise.

The examples above will be present in the functioning of a *TST*. Therefore the core members of the *TST* should possess the necessary skills to lead. This shows the need for leadership training when establishing the *TST*.

> *Today, most researchers believe that becoming a leader depends in large part on the match between the characteristics of the person and the needs of the situation confronting the group* (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 327).

When reading the above quote it is important to notice that not all teachers will be suitable for the *TST*. Those whose leadership style suits the needs of such a support team will be the most suitable to form the *TST*. The following is a short discussion of leadership styles.

2.8.6 Leadership style

In Sears *et al.* (1991: 328) researchers have tried to classify different styles of leadership. They classified styles like the following: democratic, authoritarian, task orientated and relationship orientated. Researchers have many different theories about leadership styles. Most of these researchers generally agree on *Fiedler's Contingency Model*. This model states that leadership effectiveness (which has an influence on group performance) is affected by the match between the leadership style and the circumstances of the group. *The consequences of a particular style depend on (are contingent on) various characteristics of the group itself* (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 328).

As *TST's* are problem-solving and supporting teams they also need a particular kind of leader. Although the circumstances of the group might, from time to time, require the leadership style of such a person to adapt to changing needs.

Fiedler (in Sears *et al.*, 1991: 328) identifies two styles of leadership, namely task orientated and relationship orientated leadership. Task orientated leaders give highest priority to getting the work done and de-emphasize relationships. Relationship orientated leaders place group relations first and task accomplishment second (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 328).

When applying this to the people's problems with which the *TST* will be confronted, the *TST* members should be relationship-orientated leaders. As mentioned earlier, it will be necessary to adapt in certain situations, otherwise we will end up with teachers who feel good but do nothing. Sometimes the team will be mainly task orientated.

> *"The key point is that no one style of leadership is effective in all situations. Ultimately, the most effective leader may be the person who can adapt his or her leadership style to match the situation"* (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 330).

The above characteristics of a leader, situations which require leadership as well as leadership style may be used as guidelines in compiling a practical leadership training programme for *TST* members.

2.9 LISTENING SKILLS

2.9.1 Introduction

According to Howard and Miller (1995: 6-8) listening skills are, amongst others, skills that teams need to give and receive feedback. This study views listening as an intra-personal attribute to effective communication.

This study views *TST* members as part of a team, which will render consultative and counselling services. In this case, the members have to effectively listen to clients for proper comprehension of the problem as a whole. In the problem-solving process, team members also have to listen effectively to each other. Poor listening skills may cause important ideas and / or information to be lost in the communication process. According to Ivancevich and Matteson (1996: 506), listening skills are part of good communication.

According to Eikenberry (1997: 257) we spend the greatest part of our day in communication. The greatest part of this communication is spent listening. Many people take courses in speaking and writing, but not that many in listening skills. Eikenberry (1997: 257-274) created a training programme to fill this gap. Some ideas from his training programme will be incorporated the listening skills training guidelines of this study.

2.9.2 Listening skills

The following situation in a school classroom showing the relationship between pupils and teacher is useful to define *listening*:

> *When students enter a classroom for the first time, they look to the teacher and wait for the messages that will tell them what to expect. Simultaneously, the teacher is sizing them up. Each is alert, attentive, listening. From that moment on, they will spend most of their time together trying to gain and hold each other's attention, striving to understand and be understood, determining where they stand with each other, silently judging and evaluating – in short, they will be concerned with listening* (Friedman, in Wolvin, 1984: 18).

On taking the above quote into consideration, listening is defined as follows in the present study: *It is the process of consciously and actively, receiving, interpreting, and comprehending auditive messages.*

Howard and Miller (1995: 6-8 – 6-11) discussed the following listening skills, which will be applied in the present study:

- Active versus passive listening
- Open-ended questions
- Empathy
- Rephrasing

As these are used as guidelines for a skills training program in this study, each one will be discussed briefly.

2.9.2.1 Active versus passive listening

During communication a message is conveyed. The passive listener will accept his or her own understanding of this message. The active listener will reflect his or her understanding to the sender to verify, clarify, and get more information concerning his or her understanding of the message conveyed (Howard & Miller, 1995: 6-8).

2.9.2.2 Open-ended questions

Questions which require an explanation and not only a yes or no answer (Howard & Miller, 1995: 6-8, 6-9).

2.9.2.3 Empathy

This is a statement reflecting the other person's feelings, it will help the sender of the message to understand his or her feelings and ideas better (Howard & Miller, 1995: 6-9).

2.9.2.4 Rephrasing

To rephrase is to send a person's message back in your own words to verify and clarify your understanding of the message (Howard & Miller, 1995: 6-11).

2.9.3 Levels of listening from bad to … best

For a better understanding of good versus poor or ineffective listening four levels of listening (Alessandra, in Eikenberry, 1997: 268) will be discussed. According to this research, *TST* members will have better insight into their own listening skills (or lack there-of), if they understand when their listening is poor and when good.

These are the four levels of listening. Each one is accompanied by a list of behaviours, which is typical of that specific level of listening.

LEVEL 1: NON-LISTENING

- No effort to listen.
- Talk more than listen.
- Acts attentive, while thinking of something else.
- No gestures.
- Little or no eye contact.
- Often interrupts the speaker.
- Wants the last word.

LEVEL 2: MARGINAL LISTENING

- Superficial listening.
- Thinks of what to say next.
- Distracted easily; does not interpret meanings of messages.
- Listen to specifics, not the message as a whole.

LEVEL 3: EVALUATIVE LISTENING

- Concentrates and pays attention.
- Focus on the words, may miss the intent.
- Focus on content, but misses the underlying feelings.
- Good at hearing facts, but misses visual and vocal clues.

LEVEL 4: ACTIVE LISTENING

- Listens attentively
- Tries to understand words, intended messages and the speaker's view.
- Also notices thoughts and feelings of speaker.
- Does not judge before hearing the whole message.

These four levels, ranging from very poor to effective listening, are seen as a continuum in this study. By using the behaviours associated with each level, this may be used as a guide for *TST* members to determine where they are on the continuum. By using their place on the continuum as a guideline, they can determine their need for listening skills training.

2.9.4 Profile of an effective listener

According to Eikenberry (1997: 259) you will know when a person is really listening to you when that person has the following characteristics:

- The person gives you his or her undivided attention.
- He or she makes good eye contact.
- He or she shows attentive, reactive body language, like nods, smiles and raising of eyebrows.
- The person minimizes distractions.
- He or she does not interrupt you.
- The person paraphrases what you are saying.
- He or she asks questions and shows interest.
- The person does not judge you or offer unnecessary advice.

According to Eikenberry (1997: 273) to round off this profile, the following attitude is *the most important point of all*:

One should show care and respect for others, recognize the power of listening, be aware of time savings and invest in relationships.

2.9.5 Benefits of effective listening

Without any discussion, the following is a list of benefits of effective listening skills as provided by Eikenberry (1997: 259):

- Improved relationships
- Fewer misunderstandings
- Higher productivity
- Less re-work
- Less frustration

2.9.6 Practical guidelines A PROPOSAL

In Eikenberry's training workshop he proposed these action steps in the form of a proposal, using each of the letters as a step in the process. This *proposal* of Eikenberry (1997: 269) will be quoted and explained below as proposed action steps to implement effective listening skills.

P – *Probe for understanding*

The role of the listener should really be to understand the sender's message. As much as possible should be done to understand.

R – *Reflect*

This is one of the best ways to make sure you understand a person's message.

O – *One thing at a time*

Ignore distractions, concentrate on LISTENING.

P – *Pause*

Silences are allowed, stop and think!

O – *Observe nonverbal behavior*

Much of the real message will not be said in words.

S – *Summarize*

Summarize the message in your own words, to make sure you understand it properly.

A – *Acknowledge*

You don't have to agree with the message, but respect the sender's opinions.

L – *Let the speaker finish*

Do not interrupt the speaker.

2.9.7 Conclusion

The discussion above again offer very broad guidelines. This may be adapted and formed into an action plan to suit the *TST's* needs.

INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS

2.10 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

2.10.1 Introduction

Clarity of verbal and nonverbal communication is essential if a team is to function effectively (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329).

Clear communication is every team member's own responsibility. The person who acts as a leader at a particular time may use communication skills such as paraphrasing and summarising (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329). Team members should use communication skills to ensure their messages to be heard and understood by other team members.

> *To the extent that organizational communications are less effective than they might be, organizations will be less effective than they might be* (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 488).

This is also applicable to the *TST*, which is also a certain type of organization.

Communication among people does not depend on technology but rather on forces in people and their surroundings. It is a process that occurs within people (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 488). Therefore it is important to teach members of the *TST* these skills and process, to improve the communication within the team.

2.10.2 Communication: a brief definition

The word *communication* is derived from the Latin *communis,* meaning *common.* Thus communication may be defined as the process in which the communicator seeks to establish a *commonness* with a receiver (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 489).

Communication may thus be defined as the transfer of information and understanding through the use of common symbols. Effective communication is the result of a common understanding between the communicator and the receiver (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 489).

2.10.3 The communication process

A better understanding of the communication process might assist the members of the *TST* in the process of improved communication. Figure 2.4 is a diagrammatic view of the elements of this process.

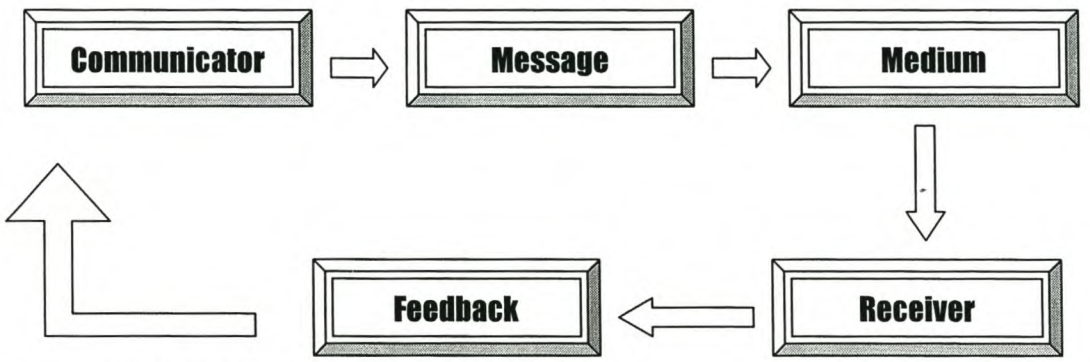


Figure 2.4: The communication process

The basic elements of the communication process include: a communicator, the message, the medium, the receiver, and feedback. This may be summarized as: who ... says what ... in what way ... to whom ... with what effect? These elements should not be viewed as separate. They are, rather, descriptive of the acts that have to be performed for any type of communication to occur. The following are the elements of communication discussed briefly (Ivanchevich & Matteson, 1996: 489-492):

2.10.3.1 The communicator

The communicator is a person with, ideas, intentions, information and a purpose for communicating. The communicator must encode his or her message by providing a form in which the ideas and purposes may be expressed.

2.3.10.2 The message

The message is the result of encoding. It is what the individual hopes to communicate to the intended receiver. The exact form it takes depends on the medium used to carry the message. The message may be verbal or nonverbal. Unintended messages can be transmitted by silence, inaction or certain choices or decisions made. Messages may be used to convey certain information, when other information is what is really conveyed. Messages like this usually protect the sender, rather than to facilitate understanding by the receiver.

2.3.10.3 The medium

The medium carries the message. Examples of the medium are: face-to-face interactions, group meetings (as will mostly be the case with the *TST*), telephone, reports, memos and very recently the electronic media.

2.3.10.4 The receiver

The receiver will decode the message through his or her thought processes. Receivers interpret the message in light of their own previous experiences and frames of reference. The closer the decoded message is to the intent desired by the communicator, the more effective is the communication. It is thus important for the sender to be receiver-orientated. Receiver-orientatedness is an important skill to be taught to members of the *TST* to ensure proper and clear communication.

2.3.10.5 Regular feedback

Regular feedback provides a channel for receiver response. This enables the communicator to determine whether his or her message was understood as it was

intended. Two-way communication processes provide for this important receiver-to-communicator feedback. Direct feedback through verbal messages is possible in face-to-face interactions as in the *TST*. Other subtle means of communication such as facial expressions of discontent or misunderstanding may also be present. Indirect means of feedback may indicate communication breakdowns. Such indirect means in the functioning of the *TST* may be poor results or outcomes of the team efforts.

2.3.10.6 Noise

Noise represent factors which distort the intended message. It may occur in each one of the elements of the communication process.

If *TST* members understand this process, they can identify and improve problematic elements that inhibit proper communication.

2.10.4 Non-verbal messages

Non-verbal messages are the physical cues that characterize the communicator's physical presentation. These cues include head, face and eye movements, posture, distance, gestures, voice tone, and clothing and dress choices.

Some non-verbal messages are spontaneous and unregulated expressions of emotion, while others are conscious and deliberately presented. Non-verbal messages can be difficult to suppress. They can contradict the message the communicator is sending verbally. They are more apparent to the people who observe them than those who send them. Many non-verbal messages are susceptible to multiple interpretations. Research indicates that facial expressions and eye contact and movements generally provide information about the type of emotion, while such physical cues as distance, posture, and gestures indicate the intensity of the emotion. Thus communicators often send a great deal more information than is obtained in verbal messages.

To increase the effectiveness of communication, a person must be aware of the non-verbal as well as the verbal content of messages (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 492).

TST members must also be made aware of the influence and meaning of non-verbal messages in communication skills training. These non-verbal clues have an influence on the clarity of messages conveyed.

2.10.5 Cross-cultural communication

In schools there are a variety of cultures present. This is not only the case amongst the learners, but also amongst staff members. The following statement concerning cross-cultural communication was made in an article on the internet.

> *In pursuing their mission, a school's staff must be sensitive to a variety of human, community, and institutional differences and learn strategies for dealing with them. With respect to working with students and their parents, staff members encounter differences in*
>
> - *socio-cultural and economic background and current lifestyle*
> - *primary language spoken*
> - *skin color*
> - *sex*
> - *motivation for help*
>
> *and much more* (Nelson, 1999: 1).

On being confronted with so many different people, some understanding of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication must be covered in *TST* training.

Communicating exactly what you want to people of the same culture is a challenge. Achieving the desired results cross-culturally can present special problems. Many difficulties stem from language use and problems with direct translation. Language

translation is not the only source of problems. Head, hand, and arm gestures may have different meanings in different cultures. There are also different cultural interpretations of the significance of eye contact, the physical distance maintained between two people talking with one another and ways of addressing people.

According to Nelson (1999: 2), differences may inhibit effective working relationships when they cause negative attitudes. Negative feelings may motivate conflict and poor communication.

Effective cross-cultural communications require that we become less ethnocentric and more culturally sensitive (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 497-499). These are skills to be taught to members of *TST's*, because of the cultural diversity of the teachers on the staff of many schools in South Africa.

2.10.6 Barriers to effective communication

In the guidelines set for training of effective communication skills, the barriers to effective communication should be brought to the attention of *TST* team members. They should be on guard against these to improve communication in the team. Without knowing what they are, the latter will not be possible. Therefore the following is a discussion of barriers to effective communication (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 500-503):

2.10.6.1 Frame of reference

Different individuals may interpret the same communication differently depending on their previous experience, value system and beliefs. *(A member of the TST may experience a joke by another member as offensive.)*

2.10.6.2 Selective listening

Selective listening is a form of selective perception in which we tend to block out new information, especially if it conflicts with what we believe. *(A TST member who do not believe in the systems approach, will ignore solutions which include the bigger context of a problem.)*

2.10.6.3 Value judgements

Value judgements involve assigning an overall value to a message prior to receiving the entire communication. *(A TST member becomes angry before hearing the full story.)*

2.10.6.4 Source credibility

Source credibility is the trust, confidence, and faith that the receiver has in the words and actions of the communicator.

(If TST members do not believe in each other's expertise or capabilities and do not trust one another, they lack in source credibility.)

2.10.6.5 Filtering

Filtering refers to the manipulation of information so that the receiver perceives it as positive. *(A TST member manipulates negative feedback on his or her actions by blaming somebody or something else.)*

2.10.6.6 In-group language

In-group language is nearly the same as the use of highly technical jargon by professionals for very simple procedures or familiar objects. Many times certain groups develop words or phrases that have meaning only to members. This can be positive for in-group cohesiveness and feelings of belonging. In a *TST* where people from outside join the group for help, this may be a big barrier of communication between temporary participants and core group members.

2.10.6.7 Status difference

Hierarchy status differences may be seen as a threat by people lower in the hierarchy. *(A teacher in the TST may feel threatened by a member of management on the same team.)*

2.10.6.8 Time pressures

The pressure of time is an important barrier to communication. This barrier even plays an important roll in decision making, where urgency usually affects the process negatively. People may feel they do not have enough time to communicate regularly or as thoroughly as they should. The group may even leave someone who normally would be included, out of the normal chain of communication. In this way communication may become impaired to such an extent that even more time is wasted in the process. *(When the TST is pressurized for time, the members may not make time to listen to important inputs from all the members.)*

2.10.6.9 Communication overload

The last decade often has been described as the *Information Era*. Because of an overload of information, team members, especially the person who acts as the leader at any time, may screen out many messages. This may result in important messages not being encoded and therefore impaired understanding of the situation or communication. *(In this case TST members may ignore useful information about a situation from outside members.)*

These are the most common barriers, although not the only ones. The barriers are either within the individuals or part of the dynamics of the team or group. Both of these, the individual and the group, should be changed to improve effective communication (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996: 503).

2.10.7 Skills to improve communication

Very specific communication skills, which can be taught during *TST* training, are available in literature. The following is a list of communication skills as set by Ivancevich and Matteson (1996: 506), which are necessary to improve the message being communicated:

- Following up (attempts to determine whether you were understood correctly)
- Principle of sufficiency (to ensure an optimum flow of information)
- Empathy (it involves being receiver orientated)
- Repetition (communicate a message more than once)
- Encouraging mutual trust (trust each other and be trustworthy)
- Effective timing (don't waste time on issues which are not priority)
- Simplifying language (don't use technical jargon)
- Utilizing feedback (give each other feedback; soon and often)
- Effective listening (utilize listening skills effectively)
- Using the grapevine (the important information communication channel that exists in most organizations)

In conclusion Nelson (1999: 5) supplied the following suggestions, in respect of building relationships and effective communication:

- People should learn the ability to understand and appreciate a person's thoughts and feelings – to have empathy with one another.
- People should show real interest and respect to others – they should convey genuine regard and respect.
- People should be good, non-judgemental listeners – they should talk with each other, not to each other.

2.11 CO-OPERATION

2.11.1 Introduction

Salas *et al.* (1995: 127) examined teamwork as part of a team's tasks. Amongst other skills or behaviours Morgan et al. in Salas (1995: 127) found co-operation to be crucial for effective teamwork. Thus for a *TST* to be an effective team, cooperation skills will be necessary.

2.11.2 Co-operation: a brief definition

Co-operation in groups is well defined by Sears, Replau and Taylor (1991: 319) by describing the difference between co-operation and competition in groups.
In some groups, people interact cooperatively: they help each other, share information, and work together for mutual benefit Sears *et al.* (1991: 319). This is co-operation within a *TST*.

In contrast with co-operation: *In other groups, people compete: they put their own individual goals first and strive to outperform the rest* (Sears *et al.*, 1991: 319). Should the latter be the case in a *TST*, teamwork will not be possible and the possibilities of the team will be restricted.

In co-operative situations there is a co-operative reward structure. Because all the members' rewards are positively linked, what happens to one person will also affect the others Sears *et al.* (1991: 319). If applied to *TST's* this means that the members of a particular *TST* work together towards the same goal or solution of a problem. Members' rewards are therefore linked and then what happens also affects everybody in a certain sense. In this study, co-operation simply means *working together*.

2.11.3 Determinants to enhance co-operation

As cooperation is important to the effective functioning of the *TST*, co-operation skills should be included in training. To accomplish this, the following determinants to enhance co-operation by Sears *et al.* (1991: 319) is worth noting:

- Situations with explicit and important rewards.
- Value orientations and individual traits towards co-operation.
- More communication leads to better co-operation.
- Smaller groups enhance cooperation – as size increases co-operation decreases.
- Reciprocity: co-operation usually encourages more co-operation.

2.11.4 Co-operation in *TST's*

Elliot and Sheridan (1992: 329) stated a set of characteristics of effective teams. One of these hallmarks of effective teams is the participation of all members. As each team member has a purpose, no one should dominate the team meeting at the expense of other members. If this should happen, the range of perspectives, ideas, and solutions to problems will be inhibited during the problem-solving process. If co-operation between members of the *TST* does not exist, the purpose of being a team will be missed.

The example of *The art of Co-operative Development* will be used to illustrate the importance of *co-operation* in the learning and teaching process which occurs in a *TST*. Through co-operation members improve each other's abilities. Edge (in Lansley, 1994: 52) suggests that agreed periods of co-operation between two teachers with one being the *speaker* and the other the *understander will show these results.* By every effort the *understander* makes to understand the *speaker,* the *understander* assists the *speaker's* development. *The understander* helps the *speaker* to develop his own ideas as the *speaker* clarifies them and discovers where they lead to. Thus by cooperating in such a

way, the learner teaches and the teacher learns. In conclusion, co-operation does not only enhance effective teamwork, it also improves intra-personal skills.

2.12 COLLABORATION

2.12.1 Collaboration: a brief definition

Synonyms of *collaboration* are the following: *agreement, unity, concord, accordance, accord, harmony, concert, partnership* and *correspondence* (Thesaurus, 1997).
The researcher in this study, comprehends *collaboration* as differing from co-operation in that *collaboration* means sharing the same attitude about an issue: to agree about something, or haveing the same opinion about something. *Co-operation* takes *collaboration* a step further by acting on the idea. As seen above, with co-operation, the group members help each other in sharing in the action.

2.12.2 Understanding the term in the context of the TST

One type of support team is the *Instructional Support Team* researched by Kovaleski, Tucker and Stevens (1996: 44-47). *Collaboration* is part of the first component of the five training components of the *Instructional Support Team.* Kovaleski et al. (1996: 46) included three aspects of collaboration in their training program: team building, problem solving and team maintenance. It can thus be seen that *collaboration*, in the context of the *TST*, is an umbrella concept covering all other concepts and incorporating discussion and agreement on certain issues.

2.12.3 Value

Kovaleski *et al.* (1996: 46) made the following statement: *Collaboration is the central element of effective instructional support ...*

Collaboration is valuable because, *collaboration may increase generalization of treatment effects across settings or behaviors and enhance relationships among significant individuals in a child's life* (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 316). The context of *collaboration* in the latter quotation is where parents and teachers are also part of a consultative support team.

The value of *collaboration* in Support Teams emerges in the sharing of opinions, ideas, solutions etc. and the agreement amongst members over a certain issue. The value of *collaboration* may also be seen in a project, named *Collaborative Autobiography,* researched by Hauserman (1993: 17-23),. Hauserman stated that education is often referred to as a lonely profession, as teachers work in isolation and few others know what they are doing in their classrooms, the applies to administrators in the educational setting. As a solution to this problem an urban school district in Alberta, Canada used *Collaborative Autobiography* as the basis of a professional development initiative. The value of this *collaboration* lies in the enabling of a deeper understanding of teaching practices and the providing of development of a collegial relationship that includes trust and mutual respect. The administrators also experienced development and growth as school administrators out of this collaboration. Areas of growth include: discipline approaches, evaluation and supervision of teachers, aspects of promoting staff morale, daily duties, district involvement on committees, instructional leadership, and establishing collegiality (Hauserman, 1993: 17-19).

According to the present research, *Collaboration* includes all aspects of the *Support Team* process where people share and in the end agree on certain ideas and opinions. These include the following: problem-solving, decision making, counselling, consultation, planning and intervention strategies.

2.12.4 Collaboration and teaming

In conclusion, Idol (in Hosen & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6242) described the following five basic purposes towards which effective collaborative teams should strive:

- coordinating work to achieve a common, publicly agreed-upon goal;
- a belief system that all members of the team have unique and needed expertise;
- demonstrating the equal valuation of each member's input;
- the tasks and role of the traditional lone leader are distributed among all members of the group;
- the collaborative teaming process should involve face-to-face interactions, positive interdependence, monitoring and processing of interpersonal skills, and individual accountability.

2.13 CONSULTATION SKILLS

2.13.1 Consultation: a brief definition

Consultation is *a method for providing psychological and educational services to children by forming a cooperative, problem-solving relationship whereby consultees ... in turn work directly with a client to change his/her functioning* (Elliott and Sheridan, 1992: 316).

Consultation has the most definite characteristic of *indirect service,* according to Elliot *et al.* (1992: 316). The latter meaning that teachers and parents are usually the best people to work with children. Unfortunately they often lack the knowledge and skills of other professionals to develop effective change strategies. The consultation process is diagrammatically represented in figure 4.5.

Consultant	referral	**Consultee**	Direct Treatment
Psychologist	consultation	**Teacher/Parent**	Indirect Effect

Client = Child

Figure 2.5: The consultation process

Consultation is a cooperative, communicative activity that involves assessment and intervention knowledge and usually occurs over the course of several weeks (Elliott and Sheridan, 1992: 329).

There is an increasing number of learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Consultation amongst other collaborative problem solving techniques has been seen by many as the most effective means to address the problem of LSEN (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 316).

This is proved by the East-German schools which were facing sudden and dramatic changes in their education system with the importation of Western ideas. Teachers in Germany were helped through school-based staff development initiatives and found the consultative joint problem-solving approach particularly useful (Hanko, 1993: 174).

The following two roles of behavioral consultation explain its application to *TST's* as problem-solving teams:

- it provides methods to change learning and behavioral problems of learners and
- it helps to improve the skills of the consultee to prevent the undesired behavior or to handle the child's problems more effectively (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 316).

Much of the structure and process of consultation may be used in interdisciplinary teams (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 316-317). It is therefore meaningful to understand

consultation when conducting *TST's* and to include consultation in the training of members of the *TST.*

2.13.2 The need for consultation

Partington (in Hanko, 1993: 174) stated the following about British teachers: they feel *undervalued, threatened and blamed*, their professional expertise was ignored in constantly changing circumstances. They welcomed an approach (the consultative team) where they could share, acknowledge, and supplement each other's expertise.

They needed each other's help in difficulties such as:

- stress due to pupils' ruining their conscientiously prepared lessons,
- increasing difficulties to understand pupil behaviour,
- negative feelings causing guilt, anger, and feelings of incompetency.

When teachers are empowered through consultation, it is an indirect improvement of student behaviour. *Thus, not only is a consultative model of service delivery effective in improving outcomes for current students, but it should also benefit future groups of students by increasing teachers' effectiveness in dealing with student problems in general* (Graden, Casey & Bonstrom, 1985: 488).

Difficulties in a changing educational system such as experienced by the German teachers in the Hanko (1992: 174-177) study, may be handled through consultative problem-solving teams as British teachers experienced the following advantages of consultative teams:

- it sharpened and deepened their understanding of the needs of 'difficult-to-reach' children masked by provocative and/or withdrawn behaviour; and also
- the mutual support helped them recognize their 'personal space' as decision-makers in the classroom, which made them feel better teachers (Hanko, 1993: 176).

South African teachers experience the same kind of difficulties and the same kind of dramatic and rapid changes mark the current educational situation. Therefore, consultative problem-solving as part of *TST's* can also be very useful to South African educators. This is seen in the following quote of Hanko (1993: 176):

> *...that teachers can be trained in enhancing their expertise in seemingly overwhelming changing circumstances and that such a 'management of change' approach would appear to be valid for staff support and development across cultural and national boundaries.*

2.13.3 The structure and process of consultation

Behavioural consultation appears to have the most defined structure for problem-solving techniques which is very appropriate for the problem solving nature of the *TST*. The process may be described in a series of stages. Elliot and Sheridan (1992: 317-318) used the *four-stage heuristic framework for guiding the consultative process* of Bergan (in Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 317-318). The stages are labelled as follows:
problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation and plan evaluation.

2.13.4 The implementation of consultation

In the implementation of consultation Elliot and Sheridan (1992: 321-322) use the four stages of Bergan mentioned in 2.3.1. In this study these stages are used in connection

with consultation training for *TST* members. The major components of these stages, as part of one method of implementation of consultation, are outlined next.

2.13.4.1 Problem identification

This involves a careful description of the student's behaviour as well as an analysis of the conditions under which behaviour occur and determining the severity of the problems.

An assessment technique is also an important objective at this stage. Finally procedural objectives such as times, dates, and formats of interviews should be completed.

2.13.4.2 Problem analysis

Now the meetings between consultant and consultees focus on factors that might lead to solutions of the problem/s. The student concerned, consultee, and general environmental variables are considered. The following are major steps or objectives of the problem analysis interview:

- choosing analysis procedures,
- conducting a conditions and/or skills analysis,
- developing treatment strategies, and
- establishing procedures to evaluate performance during implementation of any treatment programme.

This stage has been reported by many as the most difficult stage. It has a dual focus, the child's behaviour and methods of treatment that are likely to change the child's behavior. *These methods almost always affect the consultee's* (child's or teacher's) *behavior* (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 323).

2.13.4.3 Plan implementation

What can be done to change the undesired behaviour of the child? After analysis something should be done. The challenge here is to select, recommend, and ensure that treatments are successfully implemented.

The selection of treatments are influenced by the child's problem, the characteristics of the consultee (child or teacher) and the environment in which the treatment will be completed. It is thus critical for the consultee (child or teacher) to participate actively in the planning of treatment strategies.

When consultees have carried out the particular treatment, the selection and use of the treatments are magnified. Specifically when consultees are teachers, the following are important: time efficiency, side-effects on non-target children, risk of harming the target child, fairness, and reasonability (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 323).

One may overcome such concerns by mentioning the possible positive outcomes for the 'problem child' as well as the whole class. Hanko (1993: 176) mentioned how the whole class may be enriched when consultees carry out particular treatment for a difficult-to-handle pupil:

- the teacher's behaviour can influence the behaviour of the 'problem child' and therefore also that of other's more positively,
- the 'problem child's' relation to others in the class may improve and might have a positive influence on class climate,
- one can enlist other adults (parents, other teachers or staff) as partners in handling the child.

Once a plan has been selected, the major task at this stage is to ensure that the consultee has the skills and resources for execution of treatment.

Approaches to ensure this:

- with teachers: the provision of verbal or written instructions, modeling and coaching the delivery of the treatment,
- with parents: the approaches with teachers as well as parent training sessions.

After selection and implementation of treatment the consultant and consultee should meet to discuss progress of treatment and/or refinement and/or adjustment.

2.13.4.4 Plan evaluation

A formal interview to determine whether the consultation goals have been met usually forms the main part of plan evaluation. This includes: assessment of goal attainment, plan effectiveness, and implementation planning. The most important goals to be met are those previously agreed on for the child.

Planning for maintenance and generalization is the post treatment planning to help reduce the possibility of the problem occuring again. Haring (in Elliot and Sheridan,1992: 325) said that significant evidence exists that specific plans are needed to facilitate maintenance and generalization of behavior and that this must be accomplished during the consultative process. (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 321-325)

The above are only guidelines. This is only one possibility of teaching consultation to members of the *TST.*

2.13.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the following quote about consultation:

> *It is evident that successful consultation is a problem-solving process that involves a wide range of assessment and intervention activities, a sensitivity to the consultee's skills and environmental constraints, and a*

commitment to following a case for a significant period in order to know if treatments are effective or in need of refinement (Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 325).

2.14 COUNSELLING SKILLS

2.14.1 Introduction

Counseling is one of the skills needed by members of a *TST* (Moore et al., 1993: 195). To follow is a discussion of issues and processes concerning counselling, guidelines that may be applied in *TST* training.

2.14.2 Counselling: a brief definition

Counselling, may be defined as the process of creating a healing relationship between the person/s who need help and the person/s who possess certain skills and qualities to guide those needing help towards healing and solutions of problems (Cormier & Hackney, 1987: 18-28).

2.14.3 Counselling and the counsellor

Although the members of the *TST* will not be formal counsellors, they will practice counselling as part of a support system for teachers. They will offer educational as well as psychological support. Therefore it is necessary for them to know some of the basic principles of counselling and the counsellor.

In the current study the training of TST members in skills needed for counselling, will be improved by an understanding of the stages in the counseling process. The following is a summary of these stages as discussed by Cormier and Hackney (1987: 18-28):

2.14.3.1 Stage one: Relationship building

In the counseling situation, *relationship* takes on a more specific meaning. The *relationship* includes: respect, trust, and a sense of relative psychological comfort. In other words it refers to the psychological climate that emerges from the interpersonal contact between client and counsellor. There should be a safe and unconditional acceptant climate during *TST* sessions, especially when people who are not part of the core team are present. Clients should feel free to discuss problems without feeling judged. Confidentiality is thus very important in these discussions. A positive climate can be healing in itself. This is a statement made by a patient in the waiting room of a medical doctor in Windhoek, Namibia during May 1999. While talking to one of the receptionists, who conveyed a very caring and positive attitude towards the visiting patients, a lady said that she enjoys the atmosphere in the waiting room so much, she feels better without even seeing the doctor. This proves the positive influence of a *healing* climate.

2.14.3.2 Stage two: Assessment

This process already begins during stage one. It involves the collection and classification of information related to the client's reason for seeking counselling. The client's problems may be conceptualized as one of the following or a combination of two or more of the following: needs, stressors, misinterpretations, and patterns.

The assessment stage is firstly a data-collecting time. Secondly it is a synthesis of associating facts and events, constructing possible explanations and educated guesses. Thirdly it is an assimilation process which condenses the large quantity of information into a more usable form. Finally, the counsellor should ask the client what he or she thinks the problem is. During this phase the *TST* should formulate the real problem. All

factors should be taken into consideration; the team should look systemically at the problem.

2.14.3.3 Stage three: Goal-Setting

This very important stage includes the making of a commitment to a set of conditions, a course of action or an outcome. The importance of this stage lies in the knowledge of how well counselling is working and when counselling should be concluded. It gives direction, a sense of meaning and a time to terminate the process. The *TST* should decide with the client what they want to achieve. They should decide on what will be done and who will do it, as well as how it will be done and how long it will take. It is an action plan.

2.14.3.4 Stage four: Interventions

Interventions are the changes which have to take place and how they occur. This is usually related to different counselling theories. The whole aim of counselling is to initiate and facilitate desirable change. The *TST* and client must now apply the action plan to change undesirable conditions.

2.14.3.5 Stage five: Termination and Follow-up

This is a difficult stage to think about, especially for beginner counsellors. However, all counselling has as its ultimate criterion the successful termination of the process of healing. This should be done without destroying the gains that have been accomplished. It is not uncommon for termination to provoke denial or a temporary crisis. The counsellor should therefore anticipate the creative crisis and lay the groundwork for a successful termination. Follow-up sessions provide a bit of security for clients to take with them during the termination stage of counselling. Termination planning should be included from goal setting onwards. The *TST* should empower clients so they can function independently after change has been established. The *TST* can do some follow-up to support clients (Cormier & Hackney, 1987: 18-28).

The counsellor will be discussed as a counselling technique in this research, because the main element of counselling lies in its human character. Corey (1991: 12) stated, *To every therapy session we bring our human qualities ... In my judgment this human dimension is one of the most powerful determinants of the therapeutic encounter.*
Thus the characteristics of an effective counsellor are counselling skills to be addressed in *TST* training.

Corey (1991: 13-15) listed the following characteristics:

- *Effective counselors have an identity.*
  They know themselves, what they want and can be and what is essential to them.

- *They respect and appreciate themselves.*
  They can provide help out of their own source of self-worth.

- *They are able to recognize and accept their own power.*
  They feel adequate and don't need to abuse their sense of power.

- *They are open to change.*
  They have the courage to grow and develop.

- *They are expanding their awareness of self and others.*
  Instead of self-defensive behavior, they focus on reality oriented tasks.

- *They are willing and able to tolerate ambiguity.*
  Because growth means leaving the security of certainty, growing people have some toleration of ambiguity.

- *They are developing their own counseling style.*
  Therefor there are no specific rules about the operation of any TST.

- *They are empathetic.*
  They feel with their clients without losing themselves in them.

- *They feel alive and their choices are life-oriented.*
  They commit themselves to live life fully, taking an active stance toward life.

- *They are authentic, sincere and honest.*
  They are truly what they think and feel.

- *They have a sense of humor.*
  Humor helps to put life and everything in it in perspective.

- *They make mistakes and are willing to admit it.*
  TST members are also fallible humans and are willing to admit it.

- *They generally live in the present.*
  They experience reality, others and themselves in the present.

- *They appreciate the influence of culture.*
  They are sensitive to cultural differences.

- *They are able to reinvent themselves and....make choices to shape theirlives.*
  This implies effective decision making techniques.

- *They have a sincere interest in the welfare of others.*
  Their concern is based on respect and a real valuing of others.

Corey said of the above that it should be applied as a continuum, nobody is perfect enough to have everything, but we should always strive towards being a more effective counselor. The above characteristics are intra-personal skills which may be very useful in training the TST to be as effective as possible.

2.14.4 Values and counselling

As the members of a *TST* all bring their own personality traits, values and beliefs to the team, this may not be ignored during the counselling process.

I maintain that we cannot exclude our values and beliefs from the relationships we establish with clients unless we do routine and mechanical 'counseling'... (Corey, 1991: 10)

There is no certain set of values which everybody must have. A representative group of mental-health professionals agree to the following few values which are important for a healthy lifestyle:

- *competent perception and expression of feelings,*
- *a sense of being a free and responsible agent,*
- *management of stress,*
- *self-awareness and growth,*
- *commitment to marriage, family, and other relationships,*
- *self-maintenance and physical fitness,*
- *having orienting goals and meaningful purpose,*
- *forgiveness.*
- *regulated sexual fulfillment, and*
- spirituality/religiosity (Corey, 1991: 20).

As the *TST* is a problem-solving- and healing environment, the above healthy life-style values may help members to grow towards being successful supporters. It is not necessary to teach these values directly to the people who participate in the *TST's.* These values can though, according to Corey (1991: 20), put a philosophy of counselling to practice.

2.14.5 Multicultural counselling

As already discussed in cross-cultural communication, the *TST* will be concerned with many differences between people. These differences might occur within the *TST* as well as in connection with clients. Therefore multi-cultural counselling is also discussed in this study.

Culture is ...*the values and behavior shared by a group of individuals* (Corey, 1991: 23).

As we now have multicultural learners as well as teachers, it is very important to know how to deal with people of different cultures. *Cultural diversity is a fact of life in today's international 'global village'* (Corey, 1991: 23). This is difficult because it means that we have to deal with people whose values and behaviours differ from ours and we have to except them and try to understand them. If we do not, co-operation and collaboration will not be possible. We will not be able to work as a team to solve problems and most of all, it will not be possible to create a healthy learning environment for all the learners.

Sue and her associates in Corey (1991: 26-27) proposed a few minimum cross-cultural skills when counselors deal with multi-cultural groups.

2.14.5.1 *Beliefs and attitudes of multi-culturally effective counsellors*

awareness of own values and beliefs

- Appreciative of diverse cultures
- Integration of different cultures attributes to growth
- Uncritically share other's world views

2.14.5.2 *Knowledge of multi-culturally effective counsellors*

- Understanding impact of oppression and racism
- Awareness of institutional barriers against minority groups

- Basic counselling characteristics that cut across classes and cultures
- Awareness of cultural specific methods of helping
- Specific knowledge of the different cultures represented in their group

2.14.5.3 Skills of multi-culturally effective counsellors

- Should be able to use a wide range of counselling styles
- Should be able to modify and adapt traditional counseling approaches to accommodate cultural differences
- Should be able to receive and send verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately
- Should be able to make out-of-school interventions when necessary.

In working with people from different cultures in the *TST*, the way they are treated should lead to healing. The following quotation of Goethe in Nelson (1999b: 1) touches this process of healing:

> *Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being.*

GROUP SKILLS

2.15 TEAM WORK

2.15.1 Team work: a brief definition

From the key elements of a multi-disciplinary team (a common purpose, co-operative problem solving by different professionals who possess unique skills and orientations, and a co-ordination of activities) as stated by Pfeiffer (in Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 325) the following definition of *teamwork* is taken:

Teamwork is when *different professionals who possess unique skills and orientations, having a common purpose, work together to cooperatively solve a common problem.*

2.15.2 Relevance and value

The team approach to assessment and decision making has been used by mental health professionals for many years (Black, in Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 325). One very important value of teamwork stated by Elliot and Sheridan (1992: 325) is that a team approach is based on the belief that a group decision provides safeguards against individual errors.

Because of certain key elements basic to a multi-disciplinary team, they provide a number of functional benefits beyond that which any single individual can provide. The key elements include, a common purpose, co-operative problem solving and a co-ordination of activities. The functional benefits include, greater accuracy in assessment, classification and placement decisions, a forum for sharing differing views, provision for specialized consultative services to school personnel, parents and community

agencies and the resources for developing and evaluating individualized educational programmes for exceptional students (Eliot & Sheridan, 1992: 325).

Nelson, WebMaster of the School-Mental-Health-Project-UCLA (1999: 6) wrote: *Most school health and human service programs are developed and function in isolation of each other.* He stated that these results in waste of time and resources and limited efficacy. School staff in the UCLA region realized that as they can not work any harder, they have to work smarter. The result of working smarter was the formation of *a team to manage resources.* This resembles the *TST* of the present study. Effective teaming is considered in Nelson's (1999: 1-8) article as a way of working smarter. Teams are more efficient than fragmented, isolated efforts of individual staff members (Nelson, 1999: 7).

The value of teamwork is evident from the benefits acclaimed from successful support team effort in Georgia (Smith, 1999: 2). The following is a list of some of these benefits: higher graduation and test scores of students, better school attendance by students and teachers, less teacher turnover, better discipline, data on teacher training needs, more parent involvement and more successful inclusion of special education students in regular classes.

As teams are such relevant and valuable arrangements in schools, a discussion on some of the dynamics of teamwork will follow. The characteristics of effective teams as well as problems which may be experienced, will be discussed.

2.15.3 Characteristics of effective teams

According to McCann in Silberman (1997: 131) the ability of teams to work effectively is critical to the success of the institutions which make use of them.

According to Elliot and Sheridan (1992: 328-329) there are at least seven characteristics which mark an effective team. They are the following:

- **Group leadership**

  This is the crucial role of the leader in problem solving. This role is mainly concerned with the insurance that the group follows problem solving guidelines.

- **Planning activities**

  The group should do adequate planning before the meeting begins. Planning skills are also important in the process to find solutions to problems assigned to the team.

- **Agenda setting**

  The leader and group should decide what topics to address, order of priority and time devoted to each topic.

- **Clarifying communication**

  Clear verbal and nonverbal communication is important.

- **Participation of group members**

  All group members have to participate.

- **Conflict management**

  It is important not to stifle disagreements among team members. Differing perspectives are seen as a source of creative tension.

- **Review of group process**

  The team should discuss the process of the meeting during or at the end of each meeting.

The following characteristics of effective groups by Johnson and Johnson in Silberman (1992: 15) will also be added:

- Two-way communication
- Clear and accepted goals
- All members to participate equally
- Leadership not to be based on position or authority, but ability and information
- Consensus on important decisions will be important
- Conflict and controversy to be handled and not ignored or suppressed
- The well-being of the members to be more important than the tasks
- Group work and –effectivity will be assessed and improvements discussed from time to time.

According to Siegel and Cole (in Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 326) teams may function more effectively and pro-actively if they consider process goals along with other problem-solving and decision-making goals. The following are examples of process goals:

- Ask different questions about clients. Focus on what can be done to help, not on what is wrong.
- Be realistic about goals.
- Understand the needs and attitudes of individual educators, the system and environment influencing the team's functioning.
- Use alternative methods of responding to clients' needs.
- Evaluate team functioning.

These, according to Pfeiffer (in Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 325) are key elements of a multi-disciplinary team. The team members should have a common purpose, the different professionals in the team should use their unique skills in co-operative problem solving, and the members of the team should co-ordinate their activities.

Although there is not one best procedure to follow for obtaining optimum effectivity, some broad guidelines do exist (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 327). When following these guidelines, the road to being an effective team will become an ongoing process. To conclude, a short discussion of possible problems which may be experienced will follow.

2.15.4 Possible difficulties in team work

It is always good to know beforehand of possible difficulties that may be experienced while doing any kind of project. If team members are aware of these, they will be prepared to prevent and/or handle these problems effectively.
Pfeifer and his associates (in Elliot and Sheridan, 1992: 327) categorized problems as the following:

- *an unsystematic approach to collecting and analyzing diagnostic information,*
- *the minimal involvement of parents and regular educators on teams,*
- *teams' use of loosely constructed decision-making-planning process, and*
- *the lack of inter-disciplinary collaboration and trust.*

Taking this into consideration, it is clear how important proper training of these team members is to prevent or handle difficulties such as: proper procedures of problem solving, decision making techniques, planning and understanding collaboration.

2.16 EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TEAM FUNCTIONING: SCOREKEEPING

2.16.1 Introduction

Is it possible for any team to perform at its best without knowing how it is performing without feedback? According to Howard and Miller (1994: 71) this is very unlikely. The *TST* is a team. It therefore also needs performance feedback.

The principle of Howard and Miller's (1994) scorecard system will be applied to *TST* performance feedback in this study. Howard and Miller (1994: 71) compared team feedback with sports people keeping score of their progress. According to them the fun part of the game is performance scorekeeping.

> *Games are little more than work with intense scorekeeping, self-management, and immediate celebration added* (Howard & Miller, 1994: 71).

2.16.2 Scorekeeping: a brief definition

Scorekeeping is the gaining of accurate facts about team performance. *It is the gathering of data, the increasing of knowledge of performance to help the team improve, and to celebrate their success* (Howard & Miller, 1994: 69).

A scorekeeping system, is a mechanism to provide feedback continuously in a timely and meaningful manner. When the feedback is translated into an objective, which is measurable and often in visual form, it becomes a scorekeeping system (Howard & Miller, 1994: 73).

2.16.3 The value and benefits of scorekeeping

Imagine a job so mindless that all the worker is asked to do is run around in circles, sweat, ache, pant, and suffer. Any fool could do this job (Howard & Miller, 1994: 71).

However it has been discovered that doctors, machine operators, executives, teachers, and others who otherwise appear intelligent, do exactly this. The above activity is beneficial for a strong and healthy body, but what is there to enjoy? On the contrary, for runners who keep score, it is an enjoyable game. Why is this fact true? It has nothing to do with beating an opponent. The purpose of keeping score of performance is self-management and self-enjoyment (Howard & Miller, 1994: 71).

The following are the benefits of scorekeeping by a team as stated by Howard and Miller (1994: 71-72):

- motivation,
- enhancement of analysis for problem solving, coaching, and improvement,
- creating common purpose and common effort.

These benefits can also apply to the *TST* when the team keeps track of its own performance.

The benefits stated by Howard and Miller (1994: 71-72) are important to the *TST*, because skills that were indicated as necessary to be trained, are improved by the process of performance feedback.

2.16.4 A scorekeeping system for performance feedback

A team needs to keep track of customers, suppliers, and a process to manage, just like any small business. If a team wants to manage its responsibilities as effectively as a

small business, a performance measurement system is necessary to give proper performance feedback on time. (Howard & Miller, 1994: 73).

The scorekeeping system is a critical element of the **PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT** cycle as seen in figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle

The cycle shows the process of action within a team, which keeps track of its performance to ensure optimal functioning. The *TST* can also function on this level to improve its effectivity. After planning for the solution of a problem and putting it into action, the performance of the *TST* should be checked. The team can then act upon this feedback. The scorekeeping system will be of help to the *TST* to keep track of performance outcomes.

Scorekeeping provides the team with the information necessary for problem solving and planning. It provides a check on results of performance and information required for further action (Howard & Miller, 1994: 73).

A scorekeeping system may simply mean keeping a scorecard updated with results of the team's functioning. This can be in the form of a chart; a visual display of the summary of results on a graph (Howard and Miller, 1994: 75).

It is much easier to graph results of a sports team, than that of a team like a *TST*. Sports results are more concrete and quantifiable. In the case of the *TST*, each different team

should work out its own way of representing results. This is much more difficult, because of the abstract and, at times, subjective nature of performance.

Howard and Miller (1994: 75) set these guidelines which can be used as guidelines by a *TST* to formulate their own scorecard system.

Guidelines to design effective scorecards:

- Select a performance that is important, thus one which contributes significantly to team goals. The ability of teachers to handle learners with special educational needs (LSEN) without always referring them to other professionals can be a performance selected by a *TST.*

- Define the performance in a measurable way. Applied to a *TST*: the percentage of LSEN referrals previously can be compared with the present number.

- Define the performance in units most meaningful to the team. A *TST* can here use percentages and different categories.

- Measurement should be frequent enough for team members to improve their performance or solve problems accordingly. The *TST* should monitor the percentages and categories of referrals weekly.

- Be consistent and periodic in discussing scorecards for better objectivity. The *TST* should discuss their scorecards at their weekly general meeting.

- Design scorecards to track desirable behaviour whenever possible.

- Visually displayed scorecards are most powerful. The *TST* can display their performance outcomes using, for example, a pie-chart or a bar-graph. If they have a room available, these performance results can be displayed on a "performance billboard".

The above guidelines for scorekeeping contributes to the following feedback cycle of Howard and Miller (1994: 74) as seen in figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: Feedback cycle of Howard and Miller (1994: 74)

Applied to the *TST,* this cycle may be expanded on as follows:
The performance results are very specific. A *TST* should not be vague on the outcomes it wishes to achieve. The feedback should be given very should after the intervention, so the *TST* knows how to correct its action plan immediately. Positive outcomes should be displayed and action plans should be adjusted to improve these positive outcomes.

A team scorecard is composed of five to ten key measures that reflect the team's performance outcomes. Teams must balance the demands of their customers (issues in the school where the *TST* functions) with delivering their outputs as cost effectively as possible (giving resolutions for school issues). Business team scorecards should consider measures to ensure total quality which includes the team's ability to compete in business. Thus in the *TST* this total quality should include all the factors of effective teamwork as well as effective results. In business, delivering what the customer wants while remaining as profitable as possible is very important. The *TST* should deliver results while using its time, skills, and resources as effectively as possible. The team should be an asset to the school system. Therefore each team is encouraged to have a balanced scorecard (Howard & Miller, 1994: 76).

2.16.5 Building a scorecard

Figure 2.8 is a flowchart, which summarizes the steps in building a scorecard. It is adapted from Howard and Miller's (1994: 78) flowchart of scorecard building in a business setting. This flowchart will not be discussed in detail, it may be adapted by a team to suit their own needs.

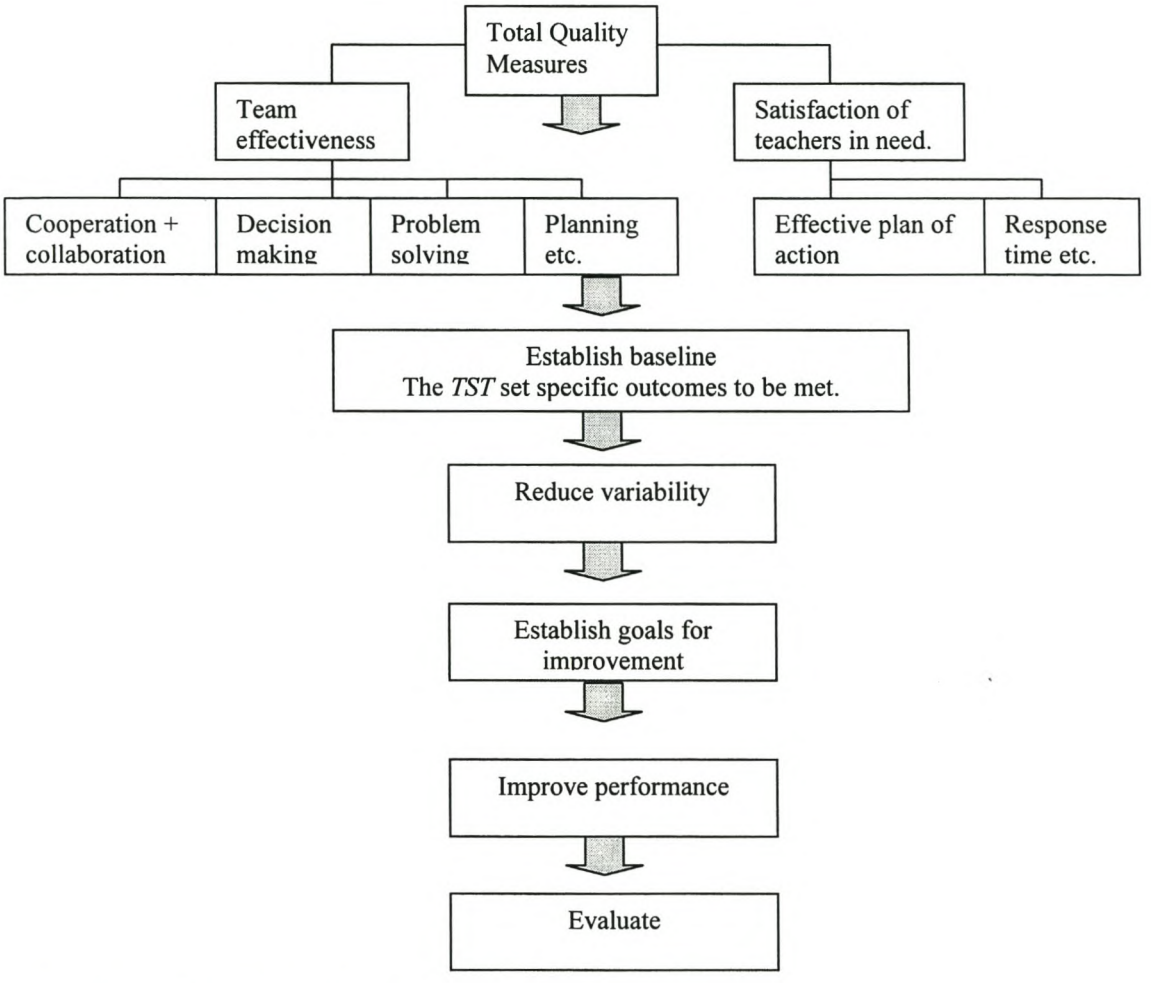


Figure 2.8: Steps in building a scorecard

2.16.6 Implementation tips

To conclude, a few tips for the implementation of scorecards as set by Howard and Miller (1994: 93) are given.

- **Define the team, process, or project** to be assessed. Focus on the team rather than on individuals.
- Identify the **purpose** of the measurement system. What is being tracked and why?
- **The whole team should be involved** in brainstorming and reaching consensus on the team's measures.
- The team should identify the measures in context of their **purpose and key objectives.**
- Identify a **family of measures**, to describe different elements of the team's performance, rather than a single, all-encompassing measure.
- Focus on **ratios** as indicators of team performance, for example: percentage of programmes successfully implemented rather than numbers of programmes successfully implemented.
- Review the **trend** of their performance, as well as the **trend, direction and magnitude** of their variance from initial goals.
- The team should choose **their type of performance measure** according to their current objectives, problems and goals.
- Measures should be **customer** oriented and as **objective** as possible.
- Teams should **verify the usefulness and clarity of their measures.**

The principles behind the above should be kept in mind throughout the whole process, principles such as: creating common focus, motivating the team and improving performance (Howard & Miller, 1994: 93).

These are guidelines to implement such a system of keeping track of performance by a *TST*. Each *TST* may adapt these to suit their own needs.

2.17 GUIDELINES TO EVALUATE TRAINING

2.17.1 Introduction

To conclude the discussion of skills to be trained and certain steps in the process of training, some space will be afforded to the evaluation of training. As the team should keep track of performance to improve its service, it should keep track of training. If the training of all the skills mentioned earlier is not effective, the whole training process is a waste of time. To ensure the effectiveness of training a few guidelines to measure this are included in the present study.

According to Dyer (1984: 316) the effectiveness of training programmes must be determined. Much can be learned from comparing different training programmes to contribute to a much better programme. In assessing team training effectiveness, it is necessary to establish training criteria and -standards for determining success. It is important to develope reliable and valid measures that cover the spectrum of team skills (Dyer, 1984: 316).

Hart (1992: 10-2) stated the following in his chapter about ending and evaluating a series of team meetings: *Evaluating your group's progress is important so you can determine what worked and what didn't.*

The present study applies Hart's ideas of the evaluation of team performance at the end of a series of meetings. The training of a *TST* will also be a specific series of meetings with the specific aim, of training and preparing the *TST* core team to perform optimally.

2.17.2 Evaluating training

It is useful to evaluate the functioning of a team periodically. This information can help the team to modify activities, resolve conflicts, use time better or solve problems differently (Hart, 1992: 10-3). This is applicable to the evaluation of team training. The team should gain the necessary information to improve future training. Therefore the ideas about evaluation of team performance at the end of a series of sessions, or during the course of it, as compiled by Hart (1992: 10-3 – 10-7) will be discussed.

Initially, the team might want to use an evaluation form that is completed anonymously by each person. The answers can then be summarized and reported back to the group by the facilitator. The facilitator should also indicate how he or she plans to incorporate the team members' suggestions into the group's process. Team members can discuss changes they want to make (Hart, 1992: 10-3).

Hart (1992: 10-3) presents two types of evaluation forms which may be adapted to a team's specific aims, purpose, and needs. First Hart presents a questionnaire using a scale of one to five. He secondly proposes a list of open-ended questions. By adapting and administering these questionnaires, it is possible for the team to know how effectively they have functioned, or then how effective the training had been over a period of time.

Although no set example of such a questionnaire will be provided in this study, a few items to include in the questionnaire are given. Hart (1992: 10-4) set a list of possibilities to include in a questionnaire with a one to five scale for each item. These are his suggestions, which may be adapted to suit each team's specific needs:

- Goals
- Commitment
- Procedures & guidelines
- Roles

- Participation
- Trust
- Conflict
- Hidden agendas
- Timing
- Facilitation

In time, as the facilitator and team members become more comfortable with one another, the team can skip the questionnaires and hold a discussion to evaluate their progress (Hart, 1992: 10-3). To guide such a discussion Hart (1992: 10-3) suggested a list of categories to use. These categories are:

- Goals
- Procedures and ground rules
- Productivity
- Roles
- Participation by members
- Level of commitment
- Level of interest
- Communication patterns
- General atmosphere
- Conflicts
- Facilitation
- Timing
- Trust
- Synergy
- Feelings
- Problem solving methods
- Other activities

The *TST* may compile a training evaluation plan, using the guidelines above. This will ensure that the *TST* starts off from an effective baseline. Effective functioning of the team can be built up by using properly trained skills.

2.18 CONCLUSION

In the present research the skills found in the literature studied were grouped in four categories with the skills to be trained divided as follows:

- Systems thinking skills
- Intra-personal skills: problem solving, planning, decision making, motivation, leadership and listening.
- Inter-personal skills: communication, co-operation, collaboration, consultation and counselling.
- Group skills: team work, evaluation strategies for effective team functioning and guidelines to evaluate training.

The next chapters will cover the methods and findings of the current study, as well as a discussion thereof. This study is mostly concerned with the skills necessary for members of a *TST*. Some effort was also put into studying the need of these skills to be trained and some suitable methods of training.

CHAPTER 3
EMPIRICIAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a discussion of the process of research will be given. The focus will be on the research process and the method of research. The method of research will include a discussion of the research group, research instruments, research procedure and the findings. A short discussion of the findings will also be included.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

According to Ackermann, Engelbrecht and Smit (1997: 8-9), the process of research is circular. The current study is but one of the cycles in the bigger process of research searching for scientific truth. Usually a research project leads to other and/or more questions and problems to solve. In such a way the research process keeps on "circulating".

Ackermann *et al.* (1997: 9), show the cycle of research as a spiral, instead of a circular or cyclical process. A spiral does not only show a circular movement at one level, but it also moves upwards, showing the progress in scientific knowledge and insight through research. The cycle of research as a spiral is represented in Figure 3.1.

In the current research the process progressed through the following steps:

- Research problem and sub-problems leading to a research question
- Research goal
- Literature study
- Research design with: research group, type of research, method of research
- Findings

VISUAL DESIGN OF RESEARCH AS A SPIRAL PROCESS

(Ackermann *et al.*, 1997: 9)

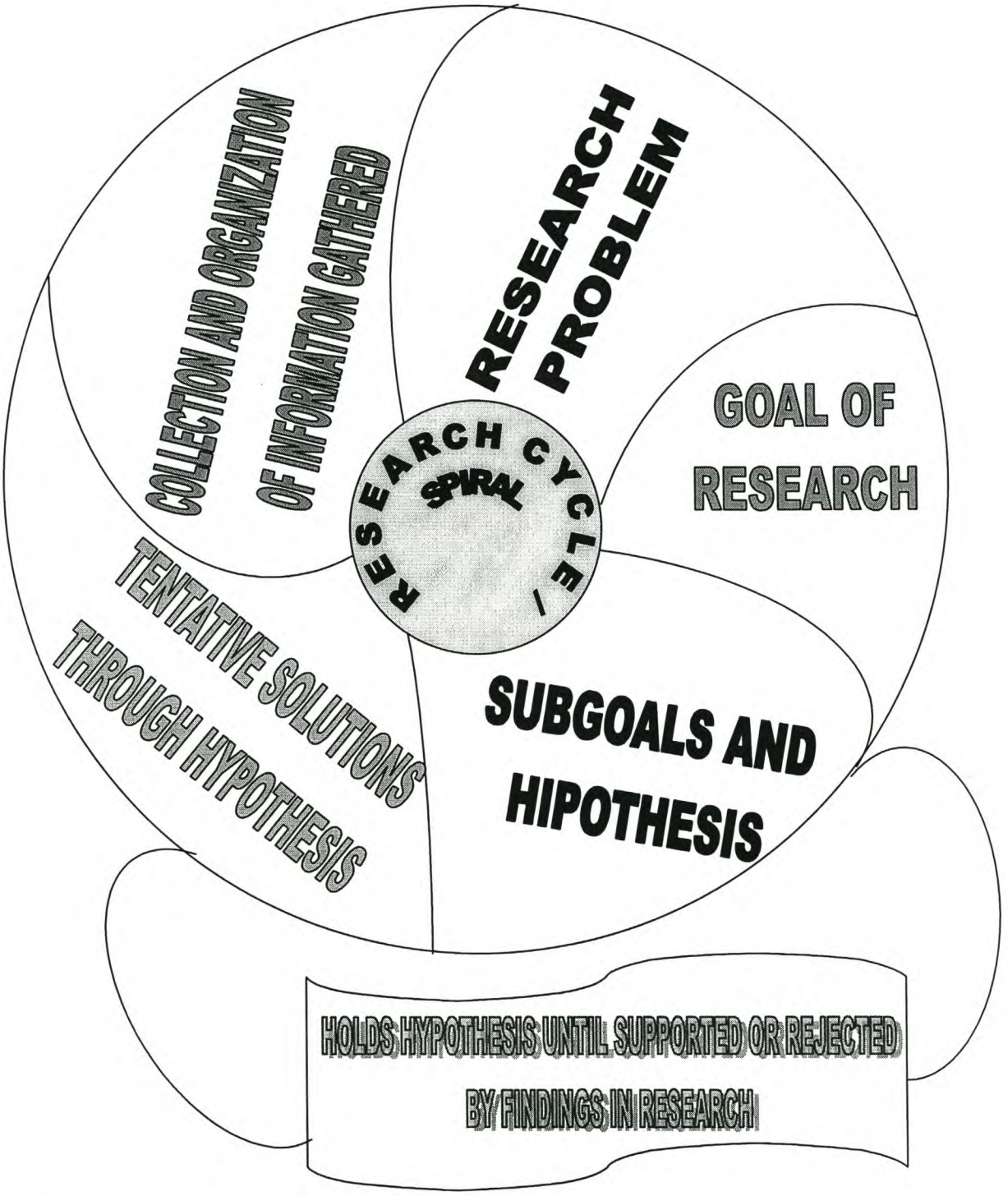


Figure 3.1: Visual design of research as a spiral process

3.3 METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.3.1 Goal

From the research problem and sub-problems which were stated in Chapter 1 of this research, the following goal was formulated:

The **goal** of this research is to provide a set of guidelines for the training content of skills training programmes for *Teacher Support Team (TST)* members.

3.3.2 Research group

The research group includes six different *Teacher Support Team* groups. Each of these sub-groups consists of one or more *TST's*. These *TST's* need some training in specific skills to ensure the affectivity of the team. Most data was collected via the co-ordinator of the specific group's *TST's*.

The following is a detailed discussion of each one of the sub-groups:

3.3.2.1 Group 1
(50 schools in the Western Cape)

This group consisted of 50 schools in the Western Cape where a *TST* has recently been introduced. Due to practical circumstances the whole group could not be reached. The researcher could only approach three of these schools. These three schools were all primary schools in the Western Cape region. None of them responded positively. When contacted, the Heads of Department concerned with the concept of the *TST* could, in the case of two of the schools, remember about a *TST* introduction workshop, but did not take it any further. One of the schools could not remember who the representative of the school who had been sent send to the workshop, was. In these schools *TST's* were not established at all.

3.3.2.2 Group 2

(Spontaneously formed *TST's*)

These *TST's* were formed spontaneously according to a specific need in their communities. There was no introductory workshop from outside the community to establish a *TST*. These *TST's* formed as a means to deal with problems and needs in the community. The needs to be addressed were teenagers with behaviour problems and parents and teenagers in need of support at different levels; physical, cognitive as well as emotional.

3.3.2.3 Group 3

(Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area)

The coordinator here is one of the regional psychologists at the Worcester school clinic. She introduced the *TST* concept to three schools in need of a support system for teachers. The type and purpose of the *TST's* in her area differ according to the different needs of the specific schools and communities.

All three schools are primary schools. They have 400, 800 and 1200 learners respectively. The three *TST's*, in the same sequence as above, consist of the following members:

(i) special class teacher, teachers of grades 1-4 with help from school psychologist,

(ii) principal and four(4) heads of department in co-operation with school clinic personnel, learning support facilitator and school psychologist,

(iii) two(2) heads of department, grades 1-4 teachers with help from school clinic's educational psychologist.

3.3.2.4 Group 4

(Co-ordinator in the Southern Cape)

The co-ordinator here is a private consultant. She has been trained in the concept of *TST's* during her M.Ed. training at the University of Stellenbosch.

She introduced the concept at 12 different schools in her region. Of these 12 schools, ten schools were very positive about the concept. One of the two schools which did not accept the *TST* concept, was small enough to form its own kind of support group

within the staff. The other school experienced financial difficulties and could not afford to implement a *TST*. This co-ordinator initially worked with the principals of the different schools by presenting a formal proposal of the concept and structure of the *TST*. Only after this, she focused on the whole staff by conducting a needs analysis. Using the needs analysis as motivation, she introduced the *TST* as a possibility to meet their needs.

3.3.2.5 Group 5

(Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)

The focus of the needs in this area and specific school differs from the schools and areas in the Western- and Southern Cape region. The main function of the *TST's* in this area is to identify and help learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Although teachers also need support in other areas, LSEN is the main focus in this school. In this school there are different *TST's* in one school. There is a team of teachers with different skills for each grade. They form the *TST* for that grade. They provide the criteria and administrative forms to be completed by the class and subject teachers of the learners. The teachers refer cases to the *TST* after completion of the necessary forms using assessment criteria provided by the *TST*. The teachers will, in co-operation with the *TST,* parent, learner and possible outside resources, handle the problem/s of the child.

3.3.2.6 Group 6

(A management team with a supportive nature)

The sixth and last group is a management team in a special school in Windhoek, Namibia. According to the needs in this school the role of the management team is very much the same as that of a *TST*. The team consists of the principal, vice-principal and three other heads of departments. They form the management team of the school. The purpose of this team is to plan and successfully execute the day-to-day running of the school, to enable whole school development and offer support to learners, parents and teachers.

When considering the role of this team, it is clearly not only a management team. The function includes strong emphasis on support and development of the school, staff and pupils.

3.3.3 Research instruments

The following instruments were used:

- **Questionnaires** with open-ended questions
- **Questionnaires** with a combination of multiple choice and open ended questions
- Semi-structured telephonic **interviews**
- Focus **interviews**
- Informal **observations**

Different instruments were used to suit the difference in context, nature and situation of each of the teams. The different instruments also had different purposes. The following is a short indication of the purposes of each one of these instruments:

- **Questionnaires** with open-ended questions

  This instrument was used when little was known about the specific context and needs of a *TST*.

- **Questionnaires** with a combination of multiple choice and open ended questions

  Some structure was added to open-ended questionnaires to assist *TST*-members when they were still in the very early phases of implementation and might be unsure about many aspects of the *TST* concept.

- Semi-structured telephonic **interviews**

  This was used when information could be gathered by talking to the co-ordinator. There was thus no restriction by the using of questionnaires with specific questions.

- Focus **interviews**

  The main purpose of this instrument was to verify data gained by using the other instruments.

- Informal **observations**

  Informal observations were used to gain some information and general trends which were not always possible through the more formal instruments.

All the above instruments will now be discussed under the following headings:

- Research group/s to which it was applied
- Purpose
- Main aim/s

The discussions of the instruments are represented in Tables 3.1 to 3.5.

3.3.3.1 Questionnaires with open-ended questions

Table 3.1: Questionnaires with open-ended questions

GROUP/S applied to	PURPOSE	MAIN AIMS
Group 1 (50 Schools in the Western Cape - *TST* implementation workshop already done)	Open-ended questions were used because little was known about the context and needs of these *TST's*.	The collection of information concerning the context and skills needed by these *TST's*.
Group 2 (Spontaneously formed *TST's*, no formal implementation process used)	To gain information concerning the school and community's needs, purpose of the *TST*, members, rational, problems, successes, and skills needed.	To understand the context of these *TST's* as well as the skills needed by the members to let the teams function effectively.
Group 6 (The management team with a *TST* nature)	To gain information about the team's purpose, goals, and nature. To verify the researcher's informal observations concerning the *TST* nature of this team.	To gain some information concerning the skills needed by the members as well as preferred training methods.
	A COMMON PURPOSE Gaining of unknown information	COMMON AIMS To find the purpose of the teams, areas where training is needed and a preferred method/s of training for each team.

3.3.3.2 Questionnaires with open-ended questions combined with multiple choice

Table 3.2: Questionnaires with open-ended questions combined with multiple choice

GROUP/S applied to	PURPOSE	MAIN AIMS
Group 3 (Co-ordinator in the Worcester area)	Questionnaires were more structured because these teams were still in the early phases of implementation of *TST's*. To compare the newly introduced *TST's* needs concerning skills to be trained with information found in literature and to add to this list.	To provide a list of common skills needed by *TST's* from literature. Team members could choose applicable ones. Team members could add their situation-specific needs to the list, using the open-ended questions. Preferred methods of training could be indicated by using the multiple choice section on methods of training. Multiple choice was used in the latter case because of these teams' lack of experience in training methods.

3.3.3.3 Semi-structured telephonic interviews

Table 3.3: Semi-structured telephonic interviews

GROUP/S applied to	PURPOSE	MAIN AIMS
Group 3 (Co-ordinator in the Worcester area)	Telephonic interviews were used to discuss the implementation process done by this co-ordinator, to elaborate on the feedback from the questionnaires and to verify the researcher's comprehension of the findings.	Verification and elaboration of findings from questionnaires.
Group 4 (Co-ordinator from the South Cape)	Continued telephonic interviews were used to keep track with the progress of the implementation process of *TST's* in different schools in the Southern Cape. A set list of questions as well as informal discussions were used to gain information. This was the most effective way of gaining information of the dynamics in the concerned schools as noticed by the co-ordinator.	Verification and elaboration of findings from questionnaires.
Group 5 (Co-ordinator from the Oranjemund area)	As the researcher on collected data from the co-ordinator, telephonic interviews were more effective than questionnaires. The latter is too restrictive.	Verification and elaboration of findings from questionnaires.
Groups 4 and 5 (Co-ordinators from the South Cape and Oranjemund)	To gain information and collect data without using questionnaires. The source of information was the co-ordinator, rather than the *TST* members.	To target the co-ordinator of the *TST's* as source of information about needs for skills-training content and methods of training.
	The COMMON PURPOSE for the groups above was thus to collect data without being restricted by questionnaires.	

3.3.3.4 Focus interviews

Table 3.4: Focus interviews

GROUP/S applied to	PURPOSE	MAIN AIMS
All groups where questionnaires had been used	To clear the nature and purpose of the current research with the contact persons.	To improve communication between the researcher and resources.
	To dicuss the different contexts of the *TST's* .	To verify and assure scientific validity of the research findings.

	To verify the researcher's comprehension of the questionnaires received from the specific groups.	

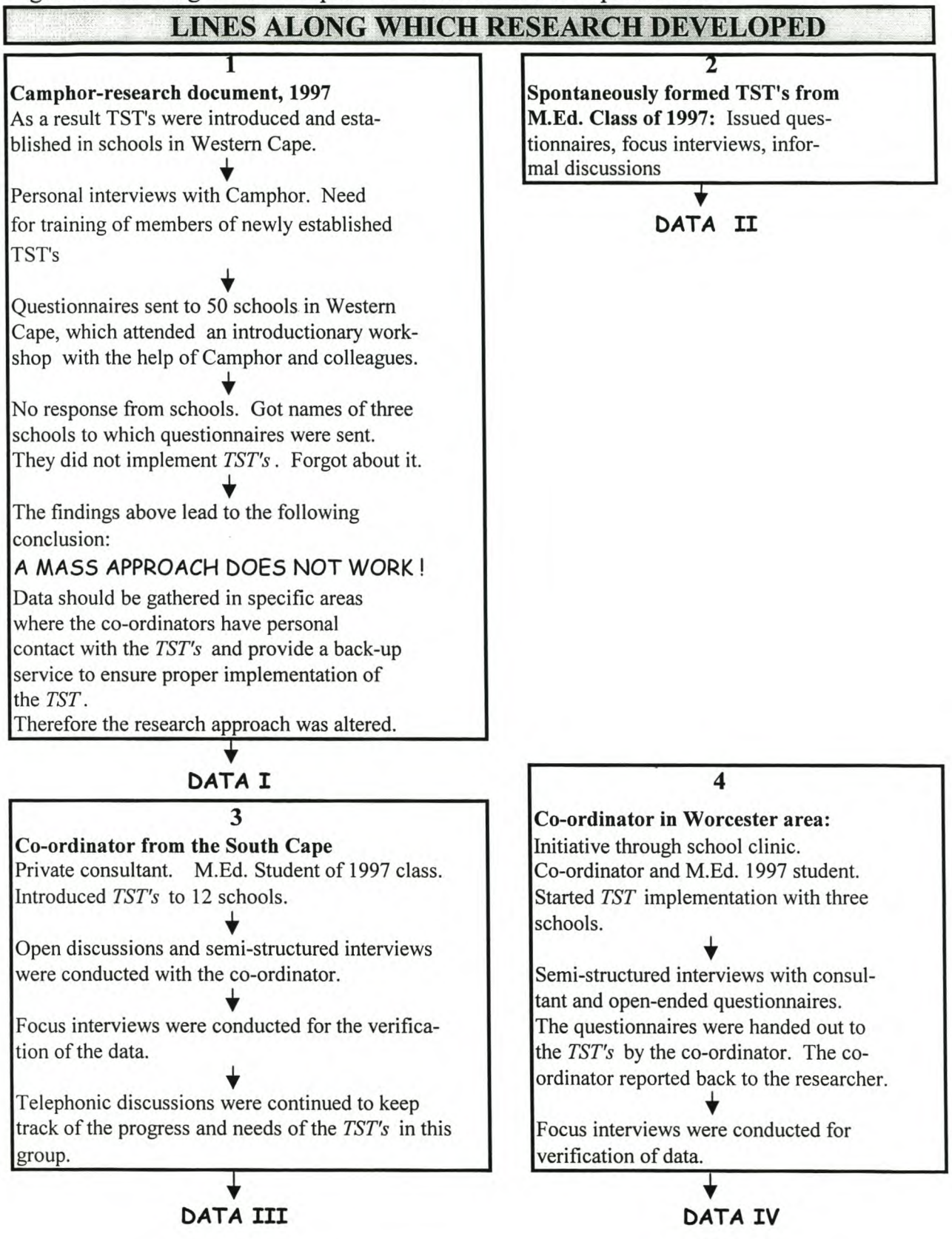
3.3.3.5 Informal observations

Table 3.5: Informal observations

GROUP/S applied to	PURPOSE	MAIN AIMS
Groups 2,3,4,5,6 and *TST* implementation workshops	As the current research is a qualitative study, dynamics concerning the whole process of *TST* implementation and the skills needed by *TST* members were observed throughout the process of data collection.	To notice general trends currently concerning *TST's* in Southern Africa. To add information which can not be gathered through formal instruments, like questionnaires and interviews.

3.3.4 Research procedure

Figure 3.2 is a diagrammatic representation of the research procedure.



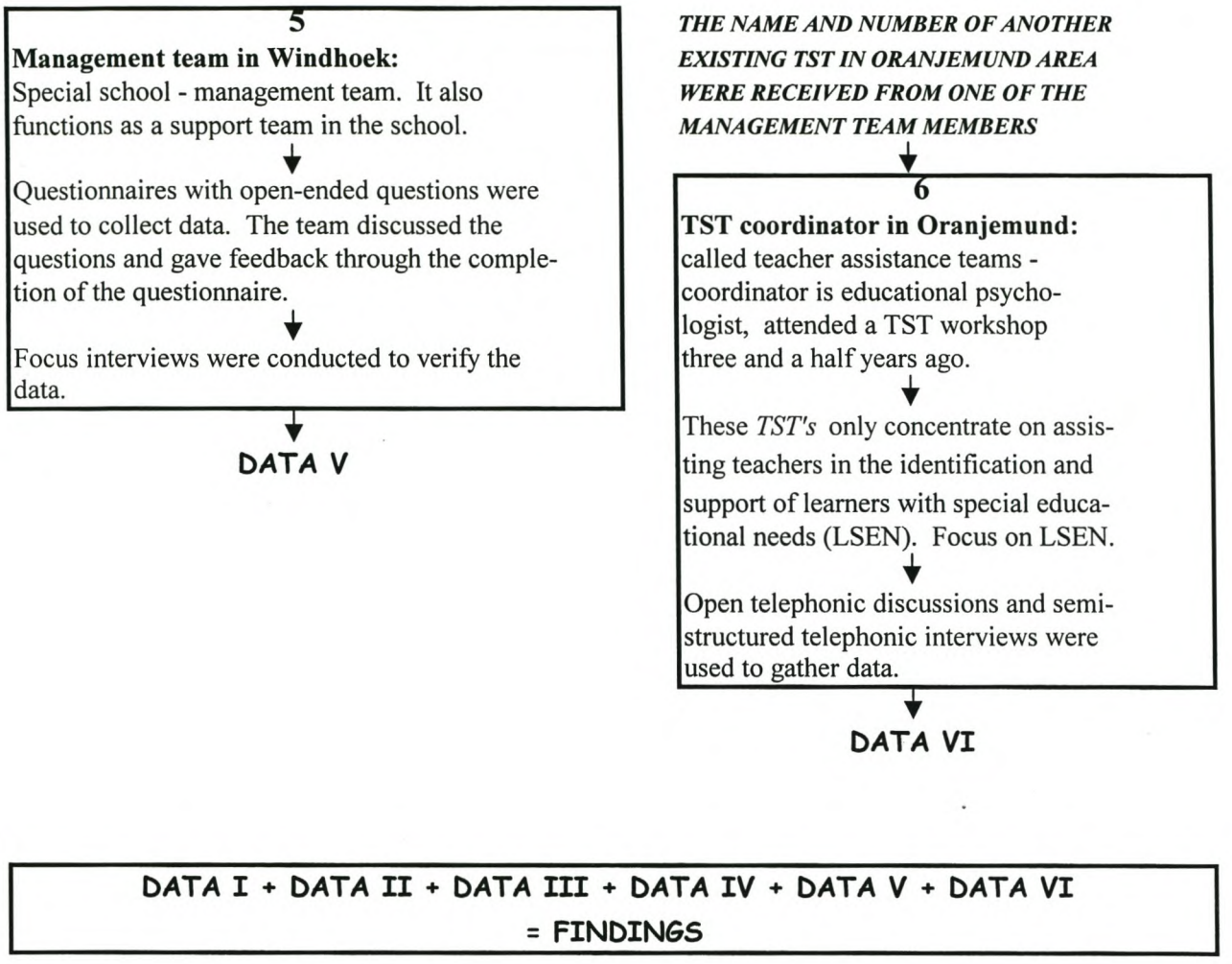


Figure 3.2: The research procedure

3.3.5 Findings

The following are the findings gathered from each one of the *TST*- groups, which from part of the research group. Each *TST*- group is represented in tables 3.6 to 3.11. The findings are represented under the following two headings in the tables:
Instrument used
Findings: skills and methods of training

Where applicable, findings will be elaborated on by a short discussion.

3.3.5.1 Group 1
(50 schools in Western Cape)

Table 3.6: Findings from group 1

Instrument used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Questionnaires with open-ended questions	No feedback
Informal observations	Mass implementation initiatives are not succesfull when applied to *TST's.* *TST's* should be implemented and adapted to the specific needs of different schools. A temporary back-up system is necessary after the initial implementation process is done. The concept should be simplified and introduced with practical action steps. The concept must be a solution to the teachers' problems, and not something to complicate their lives even more.

Discussion

After no feedback from the formal data collection processes was received, the following conclusions about the type of training which is the most effective were made through informal observation:

The introduction of the concept of the TST was made to a big group of representatives from about 100 different schools. This was an introductory workshop from where the representatives had to implement the concept in their respective schools. After the open discussions with the other co-ordinators in this study, it was clear that the needs of each school differ from the others. If needs of a specific school are such that a *TST* is needed, then only the concept should be introduced and adapted to suit the needs of that specific school or community. The co-ordinate from Worcester school clinic commented that the teachers in the Western Cape are getting tired of yet another very theoretical idea to be implemented in their schools. They are in need of practical solutions to address their own problems. The concept of the *TST* may be of great help, but it should follow on a needs analysis and should be adapted to provide in the needs of that specific school or community.

The above may be seen in the response of those schools initially participating in the introductory workshop. The schools contacted by the researcher forgot about the content of the workshop and one did not even know who the representative of the school was. This surely indicates that the workshop did not address the needs of these schools and therefore the *TST's* were not implemented.

All three the co-ordinators in this study agreed to the importance of, not only meeting the needs of the school, but of a backup system for the school's *TST*. The researcher suggests that, the regional co-ordinator should focus on fewer schools at a time and provide support and help to the newly established *TST's* when needed.

The view held by this study is that the *TST* is a new and complex concept and should be explained in operational terms. It should be adapted to the context of the school or community. It should be presented in easy to follow, practical steps. Through telephonic interviews with the co-ordinators in this study, it was concluded that teachers do not need more complicated and time consuming activities. They need something to simplify their lives and to support them in their task. The *TST* should fulfil this need.

It seems as if mass implemetation strategies, concerning *TST's*, do not work. Individual attention and an initial backup system seem necessary for the *TST* to be effectively implemented.

3.3.5.2 Group 2
(Spontaneously formed *TST's*)

Table 3.7: Findings from group 2

Instrument used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Focus interviews	The following are problems experienced by the first of the two teams in this group: - behaviour problems of learners - lack of collaboration and teamwork - lack of leadership skills of the co-ordinator of the team The second team in this group indicated problems of a more practical nature, like the following: - lack of transport - parents in need of help are illiterate This team formed spontaneously to provide in the lack of emotional support for parents and children in the community.
Questionnaires with open-ended questions	The team members of the first team indicated the following skills to be included in a training program: - therapeutic counselling - dynamics of communication - self-esteem development skills - how to create a positive school climate, motivation skills - how to structure a meeting The second team indicated the following skills in need of training: - communication skills - planning skills - problem-solving skills No questions concerning methods of training were included in these questionnaires. Therefore no data concerning methods of training was collected.

Informal observations	*TST's* are naturally formed according to the needs of the school or community. *TST* members do experience problems and are in need of training in certain basic skills.

3.3.5.3 Group 3
(Coordinator in the Worcester Area)

Table 3.8: Findings from group 3

Instruments used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Questionnaires with open-ended questions combined with multiple choice	Skills were chosen from a given list derived from literature. GROUP 3 consisted of three schools. The number of schools which indicated a specific skill is shown in brackets. The following skills were chosen: - problem-solving (2) - planning (3) - leadership (2) - motivation (1) - co-operation (3) - collaboration (3) - counselling (3) - teamwork (3) The following skills in need of training were added to the open-ended question section: (The number of schools which added the skills is again shown in brackets.) - stress management (1) - self-esteem management (3) - trust in their own abilities (3) Preferred methods of training using multiple choice. The following three choices were given: workshops, lectures and in service training monitored by a facilitator. The number of schools which chose specific methods is shown in brackets. - Workshops (3) - In service training monitored by a facilitator (3) - Lectures (0)
Focus interviews	The need for *TST's* derived from the need to identify LSEN effectively and canalize them into the most appropriate direction.

	TST training should be done in practical, operational ways. The schools' specific contexts and frame of reference should be taken into consideration. The support of a facilitator who works with each school individually is very important. Implementation and training should be gradually, not a once only workshop and should be done according to the dynamics of each school.
Informal observations	The concept should be implemented in such operational terms that teachers find this a way to simplify their lives and not a complex new idea which should be implemented. Teachers want something to simplify their lives. A complex concept with theoretical value, which implies extra time and effort will not be accepted nor implemented. The most salient observation in this group was the need of differentiation. Every *TST's* purpose, function and implementation process should be adapted to its specific needs and context.

Discussion

The schools in this area need the *TST* to identify LSEN and to canalize them into the most appropriate direction. The co-ordinator observed the dynamics concerning the training of *TST* members, both in the implementation phase as well as thereafter. The co-ordinator observed that the teachers are tired of many training sessions incorporating hundreds of schools; thus mass training sessions. They are in need of practical training for real needs.
Theoretical ideas outside their frame of reference are of no importance or help to these teachers. Personal attention by a facilitator is very important. Implementation and training should rather be gradual and should be in line with the dynamics of the school. The facilitator should treat every school differently from the other according to its specific needs and systems dynamics. Small group sessions were found to be the most effective means of training by this co-ordinator.

3.3.5.4 Group 4
(Coordinator from the Southern Cape area)

Table 3.9: Findings from group 4

Instruments used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Semi-structured telephonic interviews (With field notes done by coordinator while visiting the schools.)	Of the 10 schools incorporated in this group, five responded with the following needs which they would like to be addressed by a *TST*. These needs can be an indication of skills to be incorporated in a *TST* training program: School 1: - No need for a *TST* School 2: - Class room practices - Time management - Practical solutions for problems - Collaboration and co-operation between colleagues - Behaviour problems of learners - Discipline in school - Help to LSEN School 3: - Time constraints - Uncertainty / how to manage change - Motivation - Financial problems - Learners with behaviour problems - Discipline in school - Stress management - Self-esteem problems School 4: - Uneven distribution of responsibilities - Motivation - Time management - Stress management - Management of change and uncertainty - Discipline in school - Behavior problems of learners - General lack of ambition, respect and motivation of learners School 5: - Time management - Team work - Collaboration and co-operation between colleagues - Behaviour problems of learners - LSEN - Incorporation of parent community

	The following are definite skills in need of training as indicated by the 10 schools in this group: - problem identification - problem solving - communication - planning - time management Preferred methods of training: - workshops - in-service training by a facilitator visiting the school - practical training, no theoretical lectures
Informal observations	Each school's individual context and dynamics should be taken into consideration when *TST's* are introduced and a training program is to be conducted. Schools are more motivated to make a success of a *TST* when training guidelines are presented in practical, operational terms. Training should take place in school hours. There must be as little extra work as possible. The following should be the emphasis in training: - a facilitator - small group training - practical methods - as simple (not complicated) as possible - an initial back-up system a necessity Teachers need a system to simplify their lives, not a complex theoretical concept with excellent results on paper.

Discussion

Although the process is still in its initial phase in this school training already forms part of it. The co-ordinator presented the following dynamics and suggestions for the implementation of *TST's* and training of team members:

The approach strategy of a co-ordinator towards a school is very important. Nothing should be forced onto the school. The decision to use the *TST* should be their own. It should all start with a needs analysis and the *TST* should be a way to address these needs. Schools need openness. They need to know all that is entailed by a *TST*. It should not be more work and it should not take up more of the teachers' time. The biggest problem with *TST's* is the motivation of the staff to get members to form the *TST*. This is because it is a larger workload, takes up extra time and the teachers concerned do not get any extra rewards for this input. The school system should compensate for these problems. The same goes for training sessions.

The training of the members of the *TST* should thus take place in school hours in order not to take up extra personal time of the members. A facilitator should be used and he or she should only train one *TST* at a time. This is important because of the difference in context and problems experienced by every school or community.

These are opinions expressed by staff members at the five schools from which the co-ordinator included detailed responses. These opinions express the needs of the staff to be addressed by a *TST*. It implies the skill areas to be included in a *TST* training program. The skills implied by the remarks are in brackets after each quotation:
It can relieve stress at work and can lead to personal growth. (Stress management)
A sympathetic ear can do wonders. (Listening skills)
It would be wonderful to share ideas and to receive some support. (Co-operation, collaboration, and communication)
It can provide support for new and inexperienced teachers. (Co-operation, collaboration, listening skills, stress management, communication)
The TST can be a source to discuss problems and find solutions... The TST can help the identification of problem cases and the causes thereof. (Problem-solving, co-operation, collaboration, systems thinking)
I need help with the special class. (Problem-solving, planning, co-operation, collaboration)

3.3.5.5 Group 5
(Coordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)

Table 3.10: Findings from group 5

Instruments used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Telphonic interviews	The coordinator indicated the following areas in which training of the *TST* is needed: - identifying LSEN - analysis of LSEN's work - problem-solving and planning - communication - systems thinking - motivation skills The following preferred ways of training were indicated by the co-ordinator: - Workshops with personalized and indivualized training and attention. This will be less threatening to the members of the *TST*. - An initial back-up system will be welcomed. - It should be needs orientated. This will provide motivation to the *TST* members to continue training as well as motivation for their *TST* responsibilities.
Informal observations	Training should be very specific to certain needs of the different teams. Mass training of a number of different schools will not be effective as people need context specific training.

3.3.5.6 Group 6
(A school management team)

Table 3.11: Findings from group 6

Instruments used	**Findings: skills and methods of training**
Questionnaires with open-ended questions	The following skill areas for training were suggested: - teamwork - planning skills - communication - motivation - self management and -control skills - time management

	The following were preferred training methods: - lectures - workshops
Focus interviews	There is no time for in-service training. In workshops more people can be accomodated to share ideas on problem-solving. Lectures were chosen as a source of information. The notes can be used to refer back to when information received was too much to remember.
Informal observations	The preferred methods of training differ from the previous groups. The role of a management team has an influence on these preferred methods. The supportive role of a *TST,* which is also part of the functions of this team, lead to the same needs for training as other *TST's* in this study.

3.4 CONCLUSION

After the research process was concluded and the findings derived from groups one to six, using different instruments, the researcher came to certain conclusions concerning the training of *TST's.* These conclusions will be discussed in chapter four.

In chapter four of this study the findings from the research process will also be compared with those found in the literature study, as discussed in chapter two of the current research.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDIED

4.1.1 Value of and need for training

The literature study proved the training of *TST* members not only to be valuable, but an essential need for the effective functioning of such a team.

Training is a team attribute, which influences team performance. Members who are trained well in team operational procedures contribute to good team performance. Without proper training teams are ineffective and inefficient. When ongoing training takes place, members have fresh perspectives and contribute to the longevity of teams (Chalfrant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989: 55).

Lack of training has been proved as one of the factors which limit effectiveness of support teams (Smith, 1999: 2).

4.1.2 Skills to be trained

An on-going list of different skills in need of training in the *TST* can be found in literature. A list of those most frequently found was compiled.

For clarity, the listed skills were divided into four different categories. The following is a summary of the skills as indicated by the literature study.

4.1.2.1 Systems thinking skills

4.1.2.2 Intra-personal skills

- Problem-solving skills
- Planning skills
- Decision making skills
- Motivation skills
- Leadership skills
- Listening skills

4.1.2.3 Inter-personal skills

- Communication skills
- Co-operation
- Collaboration
- Consultation skills
- Counselling skills
- Conflict management

4.1.2.4 Team skills

- Teamwork skills
- Evaluation strategies for effective team functioning
- Guidelines to evaluate training

4.1.3 Methods of training

A variety of training methods for different support teams was proved to be efficient. Salas, Prince, Baker, and Shrestha (1995: 134) found that the practice of skills as well as feedback are critical features of the method of training. Chalfrant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989: 57) also stated *hands-on experience* as an important feature of effective training methods. Training should thus be practical and realistic.

The literature study proved different training methods being effective for the same team. According to Dyers (1984: 316) it is highly unlikely that one procedure will satisfy all training requirements for a particular team.

Staff support groups in consultation included workshops with lectures, discussions and practical experience (Stringer *et al.*, 1992: 92). These are examples of different training methods, which can be included in a training program for *TST* members.

4.2 FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS

4.2.1 Introduction

Throughout the research process in which the different research groups were incorporated, the focus was on the whole implementation process. Informal observations showed that the implementation phase, as well as the post implementation phase of skills training, require a process of training. Therefore training dynamics, where applicable, were derived from both the implementation and the skills training phases in all the *TST* groups which formed part of the research group.

A discussion of the findings from each of the *TST* groups of the research group, follows.

4.2.2 Discussion

4.2.2.1 Group 1

(50 schools in Western Cape)

The experience of very little response from this big group of schools led to these conclusions.

Mass implementation of *TST's* is not effective. As the context and needs of every school differ, so will the structure and nature of the *TST* as well as the need for training. If *TST's* are introduced out of context of a specific school, it seems to be a theoretical concept which sounds good but which has no practical value. Theoretical concepts are also complex. If teachers are overwhelmed with the theory of *TST's*, the practical value will not be communicated. Teachers have enough to do and too little time. They need a practical, simple structure to simplify their difficult tasks. When *TST's* concentrating on the theoretical rational of the concept are introduced, they lose their functional features. The theoretical rational only seems to be an effective way to deal with the problems teachers experience. Teachers do not have the time, energy or motivation to structure a theory which will suite their needs, into something practical.

The above was also confirmed through informal observations of training workshops which focused on a group of 30 different schools. The researcher and the co-ordinator of Group 4 (Southern Cape area) in this study, attended a few of these workshops during July and August 1999. The same tendencies as stated in this discussion were present when observing the reactions and feedback of the teachers who attended the workshops. These were mostly theoretical workshops for a wide variety of schools.

To summarize: teachers need simple, practical action steps to cope with their own problems effectively. These action steps should focus on each school's own needs and context. The focus should be on individual schools, or at least schools in the same geographical and social area and context. The rational can be added as background information for a better understanding of the concept.

4.2.2.2 Group 2

(Spontaneously formed *TST's*)

In the research process it was indicated that teachers spontaneously formed support teams to handle difficult and complex problems. These *TST's* formed according to the needs of the community. This spontaneous use of *TST's* as a way of handling problems proved an effective way of problem solving, without any assistance from outside the community. The members did experience some difficulties in effective functioning because of the lack of certain skills. Although a *TST* is an efficient problem solving structure, the members do need some training to optimize their functioning. Although some difficulties experienced are of a practical, day-to-day-living nature, most of the problems exist because of the lack of basic skills as indicated by the literature study and the other groups in this study.

4.2.2.3 Group 3

(Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area)

It is really important to introduce *TST's* to schools individually. The structure and function of the *TST* will each time be adapted to a specific school's needs and context. Here it was apparent that schools show many differences according to geographical area and social context.

The co-ordinator should introduce the *TST* in very simple, operational action steps. Teachers are very unsure of implementing a new system. They need a lot of initial support from the co-ordinator. To relieve some of this insecurity, the need for basic skills training exists. The needs to be trained as found in this group, correspond with those found in the literature study and the other groups in this study.

Training of skills should also be done according to each school's specific needs, nature, and context. The training should be practical. The theoretical rational, can be added for further reading. All the skills needed can not be taught in a single workshop. It should be done over a period of time in which the *TST* members have time to implement and practice these skills.

The above process is very slow and time consuming. It is effective, though. The implementation process should rather take up more time and be effective, than try to have mass implementation with a zero success rate. This was proven in the case of Group 1.

Informal observation showed that people feel insecure about the unknown. The *TST* is in many cases a novel concept. Therefore schools should form a very clear and practical picture of the functioning and advantages of a *TST*. Skills training should be included in the programme to empower the team members to function effectively. When the members feel more empowered to do their job well, they will also feel more secure and will be able to develop independently of the coordinator. The co-ordinator is thus very important in the initial stages of implementation and skills training. As people feel unsure during the whole process, the co-ordinator should provide support and backup to the team.

Teachers in this group indicated workshops and in-service training monitored by a facilitator, as a preferred method of training to lectures. This is a definite indication of the preference of practical, active training to the passive receiving of information.

4.2.2.4 Group 4

(Co-ordinator in the Southern Cape)

This co-ordinator experienced much the same dynamics concerning the introduction, implementation and training of *TST's* as the third group. Schools should be treated individually or schools in the same geographical area and social community should be grouped together.

Training should be on a practical, operational level and according to each school's individual needs. Training programmes should be preceded by a proper needs assessment. Training should be conducted according to these needs which include the skills needed as well as the methods of training.

The *TST* is a system to simplify the school's functioning: a problem-solving mechanism. The functioning of such a team should thus not take up extra personal time or place a lot of extra pressure on teachers. It should be conducted within school hours, or as part of the usual extra curricular activities of teachers. The training programme should thus empower teachers to run a *TST* which will simplify their tasks. They should have skills in the effective functioning of a team, skills to work together with each other and personal skills to make constructive contributions to the team. As each team has its own needs and different situation, training should be focussed on the small group. To train the same skills to teams from a hundred different schools, with a hundred different needs and situations in the same way, will only yield frustrated individuals who can not use this training for an effective team in their school.

4.2.2.5 Group 5

(Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)

Although the *TST's* of this group differ a little from Groups three and four in its nature and character, the purpose and function are the same. The *TST's* of group 5 focus mainly on the identification and correct treatment of LSEN. Their training needs also reflect their purpose. They need help in identifying LSEN, analysis of LSEN's work, problem solving and planning, communication, systems thinking and motivation. According to the researcher and co-ordinator, systems thinking is a very important skill to be trained in this group. If not trained to think and act systemic, teachers try to understand these learners and their behaviour in isolation from their bigger context. This attitude, then also influences the way in which the teachers help and support the LSEN.

To work with learners with special needs all the time can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Therefore motivation skills, as a coping mechanism, are important skills to master.

The co-ordinator indicated training to be personalized and individualized. *TST* members might feel incompetent and threatened if they are trained in a large group. This will be enhanced if their needs and problems are exposed to a larger group of people. After the training, a back-up system to support teachers in newly acquired skills, will be helpful. If

this training is focussed on the real needs of the *TST* members and not on general issues, the members will feel that the training is really helping them. This will then motivate the members to continue training and improve their abilities. These improved abilities will motivate *TST* members to keep up their hard work.

Needs orientated training will thus lead to the following circle of success:

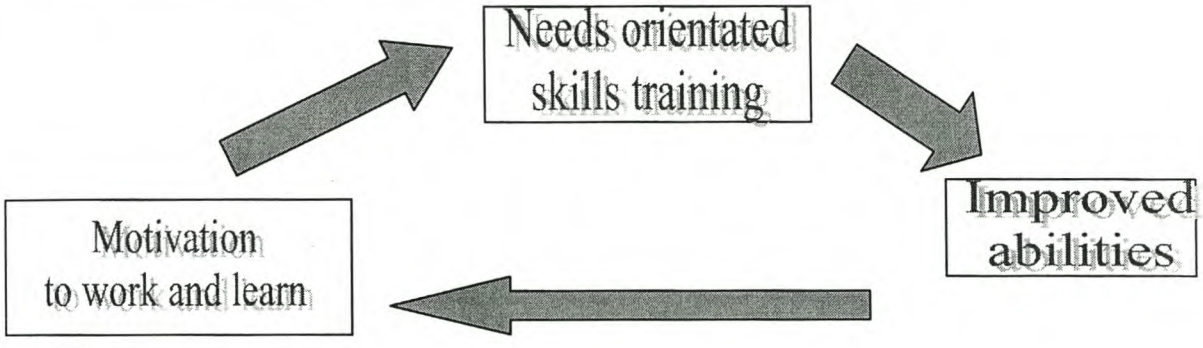


Figure 4.1: Cycle of success of Group 5

4.2.2.6 Group 6

(A school management team)

As the main purpose of this team is management and not support this influences the choice of skills to be trained as well as the type of training needed. This team was chosen as part of the research group, because of its added supportive role. Thus support is not excluded from its purpose. Having both a supportive and a managerial function, these following skills were suggested for training by the team members: teamwork, planning skills, communication, motivation, self management and –control skills and time management. These skills are also incorporated in the other *TST's* in the present research. Skills needed to provide support are thus common in the different *TST's* in this research. GROUP 6 differs in the choice of training methods. Personalized and in-service training is not of such a great importance in this group. The managerial emphasis in Group 6 leads to a need for fast, knowledge based training, with a written reference system, rather than a back-up system, provided by a facilitator. Management is much more directive and task orientated than support which is a "peoples" function. Informal

observation showed this to be the main reason why lectures are more acceptable than in-service training by a facilitator.

4.3 CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LITERATURE STUDIED AND CURRENT RESEARCH

In order to decide whether the findings of the research process correspond positively with the literature study, the skills to be trained and preferred methods of training will be presented in the tables and summaries to follow.

The raw data, before the skills found in literature were divided into different skill groups, are incorporated in table 4.1. These skills were set against the skills found in the research process.

Table 4.2 is a representation of the overlapping of skills between those found in the literature study and those found in the research process. This table is compiled of the raw data in table 4.1. The skills are grouped into two columns. One column represents the skills found in the literature study and the other is a list of the corresponding skills as found in the research process.

Table 4.1: List of corresponding skills from the unmodified data of the literature study and the research process

UNMODIFIED DATA

SKILLS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY	SKILLS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS
Change management (Leinwand, 1992: 467) Group leadership Listening skills Non-verbal communication skills Confidence and cheerfulness Sense of humor Self knowledge (Thies-Sprinthall *et al.*, 1990: 19-22) Collaboration Team building Problem solving Instructional assessment Adaptation Student discipline and assistance (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47) Assessment Evaluation Problem solving Planning (Moore *et al*., 1993: 195) Communication Relationship building Teaching Counselling Self-advocacy Assertiveness Conciliation Confidence Adaptation Change of attitudes towards learning difficulties Interaction with the community (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96) Systemic approach (Camphor, 1998: 14) Nature of support Selection of members Meetings Ground rules Appropriate concerns Inter-personal skills Problem management ,thus the process of setting up a group (Stringer *et al*., 1992: 92)	Therapeutic counselling Dynamics of communication Self-esteem development Creating a positive school climate, motivation How to structure a meeting Communication skills Planning skills Problem solving skills (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Planning Leadership Motivation skills Co-operation Collaboration Counselling Teamwork Stress management Self-esteem management Trust in their own abilities (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Class room practices Time management Practical solutions for problems Co-operation and collaboration Behaviour problems of learners Discipline in school Help to LSEN Change management Motivation skills Financial problems Stress management Self-esteem management Distributing responsibilities evenly Handling lack of abition, respect and motivation of learners Teamwork Incorporation of parent community Problem identification - as part of problem solving Communication Planning (GROUP 4, The co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Identifying LSEN Analysis of LSEN's work Problem solving and planning Communication Systems thinking Motivation skills (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)

SKILLS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY	SKILLS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS
Good listening skills Patience Understanding Commitment Enthusiasm Empathy (Stringer et al., 1992: 95) Group leadership Planning Agenda setting Communication Participation of all group members - co-operation Evaluation of group process Conflict management (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	Teamwork Planning skills Communication Motivation skills Systems thinking Time management Self management and -control skills (GROUP 6, Management team)

Table 4.2: Clear regrouping of the skills in table 4.1

SKILLS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY	SKILLS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS
(a) Group leadership (Thies-Sprinthall et al., 1990: 19-22) Group leadership (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	Leadership (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area)
(b) Non-verbal communication skills Listening skills (Thies-Sprinthall et al., 1990: 19-22) Communication (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96) Inter-personal skills (Stringer et al., 1992: 92) Good listening skills (Stringer et al., 1992: 95) Communication (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	Dynamics of communication Communication skills (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Communication (GROUP 4, The coordinator from the Southern Cape area) Communication (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia) Communication (GROUP 6, Management team)
(c) Self knowledge (Thies-Sprinthall *et al*., 1990: 19-22)	Self-esteem management Trust in their own abilities (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Self-esteem management (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Self management and -control skills (GROUP 6, Management team)
(d) Collaboration (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47) Inter-personal skills (Stringer *et al.*, 1992: 92)	Collaboration (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Co-operation and collaboration (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)
(e) Team building (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47)	Teamwork (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Teamwork (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Teamwork (GROUP 6, Management team)
(f) Problem solving (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47) Problem solving (Moore *et al*., 1993: 195) Problem management (Stringer *et al*., 1992: 92)	Problem solving skills (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Practical solutions for problems Problem identification - as part of problem solving (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Problem solving and planning (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)
(g) Adaptation (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47) Adaptation (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Change management (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)

SKILLS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY	SKILLS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS
(h) Student discipline and assistance (Kovaleski, 1996: 44-47)	Creating a positive school climate, motivation (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Class room practices Behaviour problems of learners Discipline in school Help to LSEN Handling lack of abition, respect and motivation of learners (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Identifying LSEN Analysis of LSEN's work (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)
(i) Planning (Moore *et al*., 1993: 195) Planning (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	Planning skills (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Planning (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Planning (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Planning skills (GROUP 6, Management team)
(j) Relationship building (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Incorporation of parent community (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)
(k) Teaching (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Class room practices Help to LSEN (GROUP 4, The coordinator from the South Cape area)
(l) Counselling (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96) Inter-personal skills (Stringer *et al*., 1992: 92)	Therapeutic counselling (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Counselling (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area)
(m) Confidence (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Self-esteem development (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's) Self-esteem management Trust in their own abilities (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Self-esteem management (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)
(n) learning difficulties (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Identifying LSEN Analysis of LSEN's work (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia)
(o) Interaction with the community (Bradley & Roaf, 1995: 96)	Incorporation of parent community (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)
(p) Systemic approach (Camphor, 1998: 14)	Systems thinking (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia) Systems thinking (GROUP 6, Management team)

SKILLS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY	SKILLS FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS
(q) Meetings Inter-personal skills (Stringer *et al*., 1992: 92) Agenda setting (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	How to structure a meeting (GROUP 2, Results from spontaneously formed TST's)
(r) Enthusiasm (Stringer *et al*., 1992: 95)	Motivation skills (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area) Motivation skills (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area) Motivation skills (GROUP 5, Co-ordinator in Oranjemund, Namibia) Motivation skills (GROUP 6, Management team)
(s) Participation of all group members - co-operation (Elliot & Sheridan, 1992: 329)	Co-operation (GROUP 3, Co-ordinator from Worcester school clinic area)
(t) Change management (Leinwand, 1992: 467)	Change management (GROUP 4, Co-ordinator from the Southern Cape area)

4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current research focussed on the content of training, specifically the skills needed by members of a *TST*. Very little attention focussed on methods of training.

Some research needs to be done on the practical execution of the suggested methods of training. Action steps need to be compiled. Each one of the individual skills should be incorporated in such a set of action steps for the effective training there-of. To make training more effective, a training manual should be compiled. The compilation and content of such a manual should still be done. The current research only provides guidelines for training. Research in the correct way to present such a manual in an operational and practical manner is needed.

4.5 VERIFICATION OF CURRENT RESEARCH AND CRITIQUE

4.5.1 Scientific verifiability and reliability

The following has been done to improve the scientific verifiability and reliability of this research.

- Different *TST's* in different geographical areas and social contexts were used.
- A variety of research instruments were used.
- Instruments were adapted to suit the context of each team.
- All questionnaires were followed by a focus interview to verify results.

As the present study is of a qualitative nature, no statistical calculations were used in the processing of the findings.

4.5.2 Critique

The following are shortfalls of the present study as noticed by the researcher:

4.5.2.1 Skills discussed

The skills discussed were taken randomly from the literature study. A more effective way would have been to list all the skills found in the literature study and to discuss those which appeared most frequently. Although most of the skills discussed are those which appear fairly frequently.

The categorizing of the skills in a table with systemic-, intra-personal-, inter-personal and teamwork skills is restrictive. No provision was made for skills such as the identification of and way of conduct as regards learners with special educational needs.

4.5.2.2 Training methods discussed

Although this was not really the focus of the study, more work on methods of training could be done. It could be discussed in greater detail in the literature study. A search for practical guidelines for the implementation of these methods could be done. Some research on training methods, which usually suit the different contexts of *TST's* could be included.

4.5.2.3 Research group

Although a variety of groups were included, the total number of *TST's* used in this study is no more than 12. After the first attempt to use large groups of *TST's* (the group of 50 schools) failed to deliver the expected results, the research was only focussed on individual cases. An increased number of *TST's* in the research group could increase the scientific verifiability and reliability of the research.

4.5.2.4 Method of research

The present study is of a qualitative nature, but the scientific verifiability and reliability could be increased by the use of some quantitative statistical measures. Relying only on qualitative measures might increase the subjectivity of the study.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This study attempted to provide a set of guidelines to use when compiling a training manual for members of a newly established, or existing, *TST*. The ways in which support teams usually function were used in the compilation of the guidelines as well as in the choice of skills discussed.

This study does not include practical steps for the compilation of a training manual, and can not be given to a *TST* to use as a training manual. Certain skills which may be included in a training program, are discussed in detail. These discussions as well as those on training methods may all be used as guidelines in the compilation of a training manual.

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